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'The roses she loved still grew lovingly up the walls of the little cottage, and almost unconsciously I had filled my hand with them.'—FAITHFUL IN LITTLE, page 75.

(Frontispiece.)

FAITHFUL IN LITTLE.

A Tale founded on Fact.

BY

M. H.

AUTHOR OF 'THE RED VELVET BIBLE,' 'CHILDREN OF THE GREAT KING,' ETC.

Is it true?

'We cannot tell; we only know
That from those days of long ago,
There comes to us a fragrant breath,
Like rose leaves falling fair in death;
A memory—earth has few of such,
Of one who loved and laboured much.'

EDINBURGH:

WILLIAM P. NIMMO.

1873.

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FAITHFUL IN LITTLE.

CHAPTER I.

THE YOUNG HEIR.

HE windows of the Library, in Hilton Castle, were of richly coloured glass, and the sun's rays, which were burning hot out of doors on a July day, about the close of the last century, fell subdued there. An elderly gentleman sat at the table, apparently engaged in study, scarcely raising his head from his book, when the door opened, and a handsome boy of some fourteen years entered.

For a moment he stood silent, then quietly putting his hand on the reader's shoulder, said, 'Father, may I have the book now?' The gentleman thus addressed looked quietly up. 'Yes, Edward, the time has come when true to the promise I gave your mother, you may read, as written by herself, the story of her life; and going to the bookcase he took from it a large volume of manuscript-writing, and put it into the boy's hand, saying, as he did so, 'God grant my boy that the same noble mind, the same lofty Christian faith as your mother possessed, may be yours also. At her request the events of her life have been kept from you until you were of an age to read them and judge for yourself. ward, this noble castle and these broad acres, to which you are heir, came to you from your mother. Son of an earl though you are, it was your mother from whom you inherit

your lands and wealth. May you prove as faithful a steward, as kind an adviser of your tenants and poor neighbours, as she was. No need to put off trying to be useful till you come into possession; begin now, my boy, to follow her example, by fulfilling present duty, and helping, by kind words and deeds, those already dependent upon you. One of your mother's favourite texts was, "He that is, -faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much." The young Lord Brander listened respectfully to his father's words, only his changing colour showing how much they moved him. His nature was a noble one, but reserved; seldom did he speak out his feelings fully to his father. Scarcely had he done so at all for the last four years, when, at the age of ten, he lost the mother he adored; to her he could ever unburden his childish sorrows or joys. Carefully, prayerfully had she trained him, early leading his thoughts to the Saviour she loved. The seed thus sown was springing now, and the boy's mind was awakening to the responsibility of life: and along with that knowledge came also the remembrance of that Saviour from whom his mother received daily strength for daily duty. Oh for her help now! With these vain longings he had reminded his father of a promise made long ago, that when he was fourteen years of age he should read his mother's life. Silently receiving the book from his father's hand, he slipped out of the room, pausing, as he did so, to cast one look at a full-sized portrait of his mother which hung at the foot of the room. It represented a singularly beautiful woman, tall and elegant in figure, with finely-moulded features, deep violet-coloured eyes, and hair as black and · glossy as the raven's wing—her whole countenance lighted up with an expression of holy love. As the boy stood gazing at it, the father's eye rested on him, and he observed, with pleasure, the marked resemblance he bore to the picture. Seated in his quiet room, the lad opened the volume so carefully written, and read as follows.





CHAPTER II.

THE STORY OF A LIFE; BIRTH AND PARENTAGE.

OW exquisitely beautiful all the outof-door world looks this spring
evening. For nearly an hour I have sat gazing at the lovely landscape, over which the eye
wanders, as it looks out from this mullioned
window; for miles and miles one can trace the
changing scenery of hill and dale, thick woods
of dark pine and well-watered meadows, green,
freshly green in their early spring clothing.
Here and there thatched-roofed hamlets are
scattered about, some at the foot of a sloping

hill, others close by the edge of the woods, and yonder, just where the low ridge of wooded hills dips down to the valley, lies the little village of Hiltree. Ah, it is there I love to look, watching the sun's last rays turning the simple spire of the little church to 'golden'—for there, in that quiet churchyard, repose the bones of those loved ones who gave me birth. Yes—

'Not mine the boast, that I can trace my birth From loins enthroned, or rulers of the earth. But higher far my proud pretensions rise— The child of parents passed into the skies.'

'Ever with the Lord,' surely it is not for them I should repine; and two others rest there also, a darling sister and a second father, guardian, friend, they too have joined the general assembly and Church of the first Born, and awake in the Saviour's image, are

satisfied. All nature is rejoicing, awakening from its winter sleep; during the last week it has appeared suddenly to burst into life, the little rivulets are dashing through the woods and along the meadow sides, sparkling and leaping as if they would thus express their joy. Young leaves are quivering on the boughs, the pale green of the larch is seen lighting up the dark woods, and the song of birds is one unceasing burst of melody and exuberant joyfulness. And I too am happy, very happy; surely the lines have fallen unto me in pleasant places, 'The Lord hath been mindful of me and hath blessed me.' A cherished wife, a happy mother, and all these fair acres, and more, far more, than can be seen, mine. Ah, there lies the cloud which at times oppresses me; the responsibility of that possession, the welfare of all the inmates of that vast space of land devolves upon me.

My husband is necessarily much from home, and to me, as Lady of the Manor, they look for orders, advice, and help; and I am still young, very young for such a trust—I shall be twenty-three to-morrow, perhaps it is thoughts of that that presses upon me. Roderick is away, baby is asleep, and I have sat here too long musing. • I seem to hear my mother's voice saying, as she did one hour ere she died (when she put sister Annie into my arms, and bid me tend her with a mother's care), 'Don't forget, Mary, "He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much." To that charge I was faithful (God helping me), but this great stewardship overwhelms me. What am I that it should have been intrusted to my care? I, an humble village child. I said this to Roderick once, and he reminded me that Esther was raised to a throne for a special purpose, and the same

God who gave her the needed wisdom would give me also. Well, it is a blessed thought that His strength is made perfect in weakness. But when I took up my pen it was of none of these things I meant to write. My purpose was to give a short account of my early life. to be read by my child when he is old enough, in case I should not be alive then, life is so uncertain, and all the wealth by which I am surrounded cannot purchase health. Little Edward, brought up as he will be in the midst of luxuries, may imagine that peace and joy are not found in a low estate; if so, he will read this and see the falsity of such an opinion; it is the love of Christ in the heart and not the circumstances of life, that gives true bliss.

Perhaps he may blush to learn the story of his mother's life, and wish that she had been born one of the great of the land. But no. I will not imagine such a thing of my boy. How beautiful he looked to-night, as I bent over his cradle, his long dark eyelashes sweeping his rosy cheeks, and the little lips slightly parted, just enough to show the pearly teeth,—he was exquisite,—how I wished Roderick were back that I might show him to him. But now I must begin the STORY OF MY LIFE.

In the quite village of Hiltree, distant only two miles from this castle, stood the home of my infancy. It was a small neatly-thatched cottage, at a short distance from the row of little village houses which constituted the street (if street it could be called) to the village. Close under the shade of the pine trees, at the foot of the wooded hill it stood, a grassy bank sloped down in front, beyond which murmured a little stream. The rich

i4 FAITHFUL IN LITTLE.

pasture grounds of the castle (this castle from which I now write) came down almost to my father's garden, and on every side scenes of rural beauty met the sight. In that quiet home we lived a happy life. Father, mother, myself, and sister Annie. My father was a carpenter, and carried on a great part of his business in a small workshop adjoining our cottage. My earliest impressions are of standing beside him as he worked, watching, with childish wonder, his skilful use of the different tools that lay around, and gathering in my pinafore the pieces of wood and shavings which fell to the ground. In later years, when I read in the big family Bible, that Jesus, whilst on earth, worked as a carpenter, I always figured to myself that His workshop must have been one just like that in which my father carried on his daily toil. Yes, my Edward, should you ever be tempted to look

down on those who earn their bread by the sweat of their brow, pause a moment and reflect that He who is 'King of kings and Lord of lords,' hallowed toil by working at an honourable trade when He dwelt as man on the earth.

My mother was my father's junior by many years. He was well advanced in life when she came, a beautiful young orphan girl, of Irish parentage, to visit her uncle, the schoolmaster of a neighbouring parish. Some there were who wondered what the girl found so attractive in the elderly village carpenter, but those who really knew my father acknowledged that a higher principled or better informed man in his station could not be found, and this much I know, the marriage (despite the disparity of years) proved a truly happy one.



CHAPTER III.

SISTER ANNIE.

WAS four years old when siste, Annie was born, and well do I remember my surprise, when I first saw her lying in my mother's arms, and my father told me that she was a present sent to us by God. Very lovely she looked even then; and as she grew older, all who saw her spoke of her wondrous beauty. Dear little Annie, how I loved her, even from her infancy. Very wisely and lovingly were we trained. The beauty of my mother's face was as nothing in comparison with the beauty of her mind; well educated,

and refined above her station, she strove to make us so also, and yet not to render us unfit for the duties of the working life which would be our portion. Early I was initiated into all the household duties, and taught to assist mother in every thing: to scrub, to wash, to prepare our simple dinner, and to take care of sister Annie. Add to these, that I daily attended the village school, and it must be owned my life was not an idle one. Yet I had also my times of leisure, sometimes they were spent, on holidays, sitting by my father's side, as he showed me the pictures in his big Bible. or his much-prized 'Pilgrim's Progress,' and told me alternately tales of Bible heroes and of Bunyan's Christian, Hopeful, and Truthful, till I seemed to know them all as well as I knew father and mother, or the inmates of the village. At other times my play hours would be spent in a small loft above our inhabited

rooms, where Annie and I loved to play. How many strange waking dreams I have indulged in as I sat there, looking out at the little window, and gazing up at the castle and its beautiful woods, wondering and wondering what the people who lived there did, and if they were as happy as we were in our humble home, or if it were possible to be more so. I said this one day to a little companion, and she laughed and said—'Of course they were much happier than we, for didn't they have a fine house and beautiful dresses, and a carriage and horses, and nothing to do all day but drive about and enjoy themselves!' But I could not be satisfied till I asked mother, and she said 'thatit was not the possession of any of these things that made happiness, but having the love of Christ in our heart, and fulfilling faithfully our daily duties, that those who have the one and perform the other must be happy

either in a palace or in a cottage,' and quietly putting a stocking, which I was knitting for father, into my hand, she bid me, kindly, work away, and not spend my time in wondering about other people's happiness; but that night she made me learn the verse in Luke xii. 15—'Take heed, and beware of covetousness; for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he pos-Father played beautifully on the violin (fiddle we called it), and often on the summer nights many of our friends in the village would come to our cottage to hear him - play some of their favourite airs, and Annie and I would dance our self-taught dances to the inspiriting music; but the music we loved best of all to listen to was the soft clear tones of my mother's voice, as she sung the Psalms to some old covenanting tune, or warbled some favourite hymns, as we sat in

the quiet summer evening hours on the grassy bank beside the rippling burn, watching the lengthening shadows, and noting how the sun's parting rays flickered on the water, and fell, arrow-like, on the golden corn. One hymn in particular I remember well, in which there was the verse descriptive of the New Jerusalem, which Annie and I never wearied of hearing. It ran thus—

'Quite thro' the streets with silver sounds,
The flood of life doth flow,
Upon whose banks on every side
The wood of life doth grow.

'There trees for evermore bear fruit,
And evermore do spring,
There evermore the angels sit,
And evermore do sing.'

Often, oh how often, have I wondered if the banks of that river resembled the grassy one on which we sat, overshadowed by the pine woods; and even now, when I think of my

mother in glory, led by the Lamb beside the crystal waters of the river of life, the bank on which she loved to sit and sing on earth, with the clear silvery rivulet flashing under the rays of the summer sun, rises before my eyes. We had many friends in the village and neighbourhood; for, as I have said, my father was respected by all, and his opinion was sought on many subjects. Were a young couple proposing to set up house, who could tell them so well as he about the necessary furniture? If a neighbouring landlord was building some new cottages, there was no question that the wood-work part must be entrusted to John Mackie-and even in the castle itself, my father was often occupied in a day's jobbing; many an hours work he got at the manse. One old man in particular was a special favourite of mine, George Munro, an old soldier, who had lost a leg when out in

the '45, fighting for Prince Charlie. Dearly did I love to listen to the stories which he never wearied of telling, about the long marches, the hurried night's rest, the excitement of the battlefield, the joy of victory, but at the mention of Culloden, his flashing eye would quiet, and child as I was, I noted the silent tear that, despite his efforts to keep it back, would fall, as he thought of the fallen fortunes of the Prince for whom he had fought, and the untimely fate which many loved comrades had met with there. At such times my mother, with womanly tact, would contrive to turn the subject, by drawing his attention to the little Annie she held on her knee, or gently whisper a word about the land were war shall be no more, and partings are unknown. One name I was accustomed often to hear spoken of by my father and soldier George, as we called him, and that was the name of Ned Mackin-

tosh, a wondrous clever boy, to whom it appeared my father had been much attached, and to whom he had shown great kindness. Highspirited he had been, and proud-tempered as well, for after having fallen into some boyish scrape, sooner than bear the full displeasure of some, and, as he feared, the derision of others, he ran off and was heard of no more, leaving a widowed mother and his kind friend my father, to mourn for him, and wait with sickening suspense for his return. Years passed, but he came not; his mother died, faithfully tended by my father on her deathbed, calling on her son with her last breath. Often did my father and old George speak of the boy; and on counting up the years which had passed since his departure, start to find that he would then be a man of well nigh fifty years! but for all that my belief is my father still thought of him as the stripling lad he was

when he had last seen him, and his heart yearned over him even as it would have done over a lost child; and when he read aloud, as he often loved to do, the story of the Prodigal Son, and dwelt lovingly on his coming to himself in a far country, and saying 'I will arise and go to my father.' My mother and I both knew that he was thinking of poor Ned Mackintosh, wishing he too would come to himself and return home; and we know that if such were the case, the fatted calf would indeed be killed, and my father rejoice because he had received him whom he loved as a son, 'safe and sound.' In how many of my day dreams did Ned Mackintosh play a part; yet how little, how very little, did I ever imagine how great an influence he was to exercise over my real life.

Wisely, very wisely, dear Edward, is the future hid from our eyes; it is present duties we have to perform, and in all things except

as regards the glorious hopes of eternity, it is well to live by the day, running with patience the race set before us, 'looking unto Jesus.' Mother, I said one day, when I am big I will do great things for father and you and Annie. 'Perhaps you will,' she said, with a smile, 'but in the meantime you have got to help me by washing these plates, and "he that is faithful in that which is least, will be faithful also in much." It was the dear Saviour said that, Mary, and you know He must be right;' and somehow from that day I had a double pleasure in little duties, for I used to fancy when I was doing them I heard the Saviour saying, 'Be faithful in that which is least.' But I had not learned even then to do whatsoever I did to His glory. The summer I was eight years old a great event in my simple life took place, which I shall reserve for another chapter.



CHAPTER IV.

HERDING THE CATTLE.

NE evening towards the end of May, when I was returning from the village where I had gone on an errand for my father, on nearing home I saw the farmer of Craigmuir standing at our door in close conversation with my mother. Just as I approached I caught the words, 'Very well, Mrs Mackie, then it's fixed, and let her come early to-morrow,' and so saying he hurried off. I wondered what he had been talking about; but as mother never liked us to be too curious, I asked no questions, and, turning into the

shop gave my father the parcel he had sent me for. But when I went into the house, mother met me with Annie in her arms, and told me she had a grand piece of news for me, -and that was that to-morrow farmer Wallace had engaged me for the summer to herd a few cattle which were to pasture in a field at some distance from the farm. My wages were to be a new frock, a strong pair of boots, and five shillings to myself at the end of the. season! I daresay that you, my darling Edward, accustomed to pleasures of a different kind, will scarcely understand the joy which my mother's words caused me. 'Oh mother. mother,' I said, 'I'm so glad, and now I'll be able to help you and father; five shillings, only think! why, it will buy ever so many things, Oh mother is not it real nice?' and I do believe that in all the world there was not a happier child than I was that night. I went

to bed, my head full of grand projects, the principal of which was that I was to make money and toil for my parents, so that Annie, our beautiful Annie, should never have to do hard work, but just live like a lady, and dress like the little girl who had come to reside at the castle. Yes, I certainly was very happy, and determined I would lie awake all night so that I might be ready to be off up to Craigmuir by five in the morning, but somehow I felt a heavy weight forcing down my eyelids, then: cows, Annie, new frock, mother, and the little girl at the castle, all blended together as I fell asleep. turning round till I heard my mother's voice saying, ''Tis time you were getting up Mary dear, see how light it is; ' then with a feeling of shame at having slept at all, I sprang from bed and began my simple dressing. was already away, having had some miles to

walk to a house where he was to work all day. My breakfast was soon eaten; indeed never before did I feel it a difficult matter to finish my portion of porridge, but excitement had taken away my appetite. When I was finished, my mother took me by the hand, and drawing me beside her, knelt in prayer, committing me into the keeping of our heavenly Father, and asking that I might be one of the lambs who love the voice and keep all the day near the side of the Good Shepherd. It was generally father who prayed; very seldom had I heard my mother do so, but it seemed to me that never had I been able so fully to join in prayer before, so simple, so child-like were her expressions, and for the first time I realised the true meaning of prayer, speaking as a child to our Father in heaven. I set off very happy, carrying my dinner in a small tin 'flagon in one hand, and in the other a stick

to turn the cattle with if needful, and over my arm I had a small plaid to throw round me in case of rain. As I wished her goodbye my mother kissed me, saying, 'Now, Mary, be a good herd, and watch your charge well. Remember, dear, "He that is faithful in least, shall be faithful also in much." When I was some little distance from home I looked back, and saw that mother was still standing at the door watching me, and I knew that in her heart she was asking the Saviour she loved so well to be near me, and keep me from evil. With a light step I bounded along to Craigmuir. It was a lovely morning, though a slight mist still hung over some of the distant hills, the rays of the sun had not yet penetrated into some of the sheltered nooks, and my footsteps brushed off many glistening dewdrops from the grass and wild flowers as I passed. The farm was reached

at last; and after receiving my orders from the farmer, I set off, driving three cows before me to a rich pasture-ground, hemmed in on one side by an amphitheatre of hills. The spot was a lonely one; right down to the fields ran 'the wooded hills, the shadow of the birches and hawthorn trees falling on the clear waters of the stream, which slowly gliding from its mountain home, in a mossy spot. high up the hill, when it reached the meadow had hollowed out a channel for itself, and was hurrying away to the ocean, here and there gurgling over a pebbly bed, nourishing and refreshing all it came in contact with. In certain spots the trees on each side of the banks met and twined their branches as if to form a long continuous arbour to shelter the little stream from the hot rays of the noontide sun. The field into which I drove my charge was open on one side to a road which led across

the hill to a neighbouring village. The whole scene was new to me, and after following the orders I had received, to drive the cows far into the field and seat myself between them and the road, I began to look about. First of all attentively observing the difference between the three cows entrusted to my care. Two of them were so much alike, that at first I had some difficulty in distinguishing between them. They were white, closely mottled with spots of a blueish black colour, they were certainly very much alike, but by degrees I learnt to know one from the other by the different manner in which they carried their heads. Their names were Nannie and Price; but the third one was my favourite, gentle little Cowie. She was red and white, and had no horns. I got to love all three, and regarded them in the light of companions, and they soon knew my voice, and would come at my call. Lone-

ly though I was, it was wonderful how quickly the time passed. I had stockings for father to knit, and for books, a small Bible, and our school reading book. All the first day I thought a great deal of what they were doing at home, father, mother, and Annie, and having found a long thorn stick, I set to work to dress it up to carry home at night to little sister Annie. There were all sorts of wild flowers growing near, and the fields were white with daisies, so I plucked a number of them, and sticking them on the thorns, soon transformed my stick into a real beauty, which I carried home in triumph, and was rewarded for my trouble by hearing Annie's shouts of delight. That night I had much to tell; and father and mother listened patiently, and entered lovingly into all my pleasures, and also my little difficulties. Only one thing had troubled me a little, and that was the great solitude. I was unaccustomed to be much alone. I whispered this trouble to my mother. She drew me into her arms. Oh, so kindly, and said, 'Quite alone, Mary? No dear, there was One with you who hath said, "Lo, I am with you always."' 'You mean Jesus,' I said, then I cast down my eyes and said no more. I had no doubt He was always near mother, but near me, oh, that was a different thing, for you see, my dear Edward, I could not yet say He was 'my Jesus,' but I got my mother to mark the promise for me in my little Bible, for I thought it would be pleasant to read it in the lonely field among the hills.





CHAPTER V.

A BEAUTIFUL PICTURE.

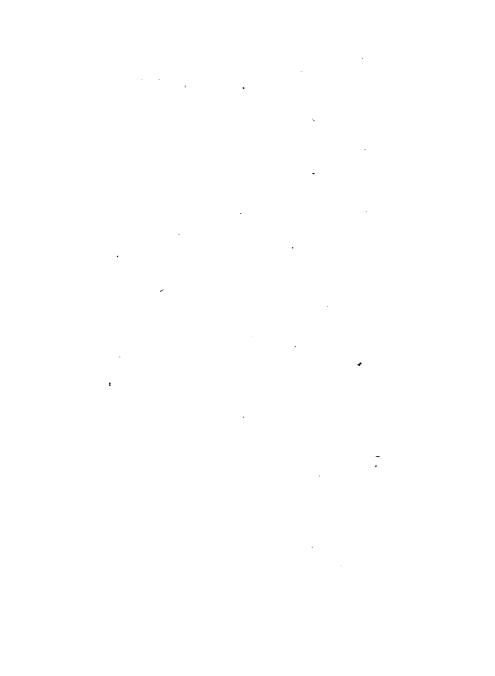
beginning to like my occupation, and finding out many ways of amusing myself, which prevented me from feeling the loneliness so much, when one day my attention was directed to a party of gentlemen crossing the field where I sat, and making for the high road. They came slowly on, and were apparently engaged in gathering wild flowers, a curious amusement, I thought, for grown up gentlemen. For sometime I watched

their movements with no small degree of interest, and observed that each flower was minutely examined ere it was put into a tin case, which one of the party carried. I did not then know Edward, anything of the study of botany, a study in which I hope you will one day take pleasure, but then my only thought was, how strange it seemed to see grown gentlemen busy gathering wild flowers with as much eagerness as Annie and I. By degrees their pursuit led them close to the place where I sat engaged in working my stocking. There had been a shower of rain, and obedient to my mother's orders, I had thrown round me my small red cloak, and drawn its hood half on my head. Only a short time before I had been busy pulling a number of flowers, intending to take them home to mother and now I thought it would be civil perhaps to offer them to the

gentlemen who seemed so keen in search of them. As I was summoning courage to do so, the whole party came just in front of me, and half started as I rose up, for a tree had hid me from their sight. 'Good day little girl,' said one of them to me, 'where have you come from? dropped from the clouds, eh?' 'a perfect little goddess I declare;' upon this another of the party turned, looked hard at me, and addressing his companion said, though in a low tone, 'What a lovely picture she'd make—I've seldom seen a more beautiful face. Milesian type of beauty, I say, I wonder where she comes from?' His companion answered quickly, 'Never mind that just now, let's get on to the rest of our party, or we have a chance of losing our way, though I must say she's as beautiful as Venus,' and so saying they set off. I looked after them bewildered; their way of speaking had frightened me, and

I had not offered them my flowers. I sat down and resumed my work, but, Edward (though I blush now to think on my folly), do what I liked the words that sounded over and over in my ears were. What a lovely picture she'd make, what a beautiful face she has! Could it be me they meant? Was I lovely? no one had ever told me so. Annie, with her blue eyes and golden hair, was a beauty, just like . an angel, every one said, but I, with my violet coloured eyes and dark hair, surely I was not a beauty! It was strange; I would certainly ask mother about it. So that very night, when mother had put little Annie to sleep, and I was seated in my favourite place at father's feet, I said, 'Mother, am I beautiful?' She was busy just then ironing, and though she gave a little start at my question, she made as if she heard me not. But I repeated, 'Mother, am I?' 'Its better to be good than

beautiful,' she said, still evading answering my question. 'Yes, I know that,' I said, 'but would I make a lovely picture, I wonder? My mother put down her iron, and stared at me in bewilderment. 'Mary,' she said. 'what's possessed you to-night to make you ask such foolish questions? I thought you had more sense than to be taking yourself up with such nonsense. You're as the Lord made you, child, and good or ill-looking its the heart He looks at, not the outer man, "Beauty is vain, but a woman that feareth the Lord she shall be praised."' My mother spoke so gravely then, for once my courage failed me to tell her what was in my heart, and repeat, as I had intended, what the gentlemen had I tell you all this, Edward, to show that even in a small matter its wiser never to conceal anything from a parent, and the doing so led me to réceive the most severe reproof I ever received from the lips of my loving mother. All that night my thoughts wandered; the lesson I usually learnt then was badly said, and even father was provoked at me. Two more questions I longed to ask; and having got no encouragement from my mother, I determined to try father. I had stammered through my lesson, though very imperfectly, and father had resumed the book he was reading, when I once more began my questioning. 'Father,' I said, 'What does Milesian type mean?' It was my father's turn now to be amazed. He took off his spectacles and looked at me, to see, I suspect, whether 'I had gone out of my senses. 'Why, Mary, what's come to you bairn? its my belief the mother's not so far wrong when she says your "fae," with your beauties and your pictures. Your long words wi' no meaning—George Munro 'id say "that sitting on the lonesome hills, the





'I climbed to the top of a table, above which hung the only lookingglass in the house. Just one peep had I succeeded in gaining of myself, when the door opened.'—FAITHFUL IN LITTLE, page 41.

gude folks have stolen your wits." Do mind your book like a gude lass, and leave off asking ony mair questions.' And that was all the answer I could obtain from my father. As I lay in bed that night and thought over the conversation that had made such an impression upon me, it occurred to me that after all my mother had never told me whether or not I really was beautiful, and so, ere falling asleep, I resolved in the morning to find out formyself. I rose early, and slipping quietly into the kitchen, climbed to the top of a table, above which hung the only lookingglass in the house. Just one peep had I succeeded in gaining of myself, when the door opened, and mother entered. 'Mary!' she said in a tone of grief more than anger. Not another word was needed, a feeling of shame, such as I had never before experienced, came over me, and jumping from the table I threw

myself in a perfect passion of tears on my mother's neck, told her all my story, concluding by saying, 'but I'll never never care whether I'm beautiful or ugly.' My mother waited till I had quieted, then she spoke lovingly, but severely, not at my desire to see for myself whether I really was what the gentlemen had said, but at my want of openness in not at once telling her all. I shed many tears that day; but ere I left for my work my mother's kiss was imprinted on my forehead, and many words of loving advice treasured in my heart, not rightly understood then, but remembered for good long after, when my gentle mother was in glory, and I mid scenes of trial to which she could never have dreamt I should be exposed. True, my question remained unanswered, but I thought no more of it, or, if I did so, it was ever after in connection with my mother's words.

'Never mind, dear, about the earthly beauty that i'll soon fade and pass away, but seek Mary, my child, for the beauty of holiness, that is a thing worth the possessing, and it lasts for ever.





CHAPTER VI.

THE CAVE IN THE ROCKS.

grown up, have I looked back to the quiet hours spent among the lonely hills, and I do believe they were profitable ones for me. The very beauty of the scenes around me was beneficial, and the quiet life gave me time for reflecting more than a child would generally do; and as time went on, I learned the most blessed lesson anyone can. That Jesus, my mother's Saviour and friend, was mine also. It is not easy to tell you, my loved child, how I came to know this, or to describe

aright the new light which the knowledge of it shed on every circumstance and duty in life. Yet, as it may be a help to you in after life, I shall try to tell you a little of the circumstances under which I first realized that Jesus was my Saviour.

The day was oppressively hot, and the ground all round parched and dry, for little rain had fallen for some days. Long had I sat quietly watching my charge as they grazed in the field. Suddenly I observed great darkness, and, looking up, saw massive black clouds rolling up from the horizon,—then a gust of wind rose, whistling amongst the trees, and making what sounded like a long drawn wail. The cattle raised their heads, looked around, and as if by common agreement, retired beneath the shelter of some fine old trees. There was a twitter, twitter, heard among the birds; their mode, it seemed, of

expressing amazement at the increasing darkness; then came the most vivid flash of lightning I ever had seen, followed by a loud and prolonged crash of thunder. Terrified, and scarce knowing what I did, I fled down the road which led to my house. Suddenly I paused. What was I doing? leaving the charge committed to my care. My mother's words rose to my remembrance—'He that is faithful in little is faithful also in much.'

I had no right to leave my post; and almost in despair, I hurried back, now and then covering my eyes to keep me from seeing the lightning. Rain came on in torrents, and I was drenched in spite of the plaid I had thrown around me, and to sit out in the storm seemed impossible. I was at a loss what to do, when I remembered that on the banks of the little rivulet there was a cave, the opening of which overlooked the

field where the cattle were, and if I succeeded in gaining it, I would obtain shelter, and yet be able to watch over my charge. Instantly I set off; and after a little scrambling succeeded in reaching the spot where I knew the cave was. The entrance was almost covered over by the drooping branches of the trees; but thrusting them aside, I entered. It was dry there; and from one spot I distinctly saw the cows, which were still sheltering under the trees. The cave was roomy, and as I glanced around it, I remembered having heard my father and George Munro tell how often Covenanting preachers had been concealed there for weeks when their enemies were searching for them to put them to death. The thunder still crashed, and at each clap my heart quailed. I felt very solitary, and child-like, I longed for my mother. Just then the

words she had marked for me in my Bible rose to my lips, 'Lo, I am with you always.' I do not know how it was, but as I said the words, light and comfort came into my soul; they no longer seemed only written for my mother and others, but for me also. Saviour, who was a help in time of need, a refuge from storm and rain, was my Saviour also—the precious promise of being always with His people belonged to me too. I felt it, and kneeling down in the cave, I prayed, and gave thanks as I had never done before. Then I sat and watched, no longer afraid, for a sense of that all-present, all-powerful presence, comforted and quieted me. I can look back now and say, it was the hour of my conversion. Then I only felt with great delight that I too was loved and cared for by the precious Saviour my parents loved and served. I cannot even now reason about the matter,

nor tell how it came to pass. No, dear Edward, in matters like these, so far above our finite understandings, it is better not to seek to be wise above what is written, but to remember the words of Jesus in answer to the question, 'How can these things be?' The fact that 'as the wind bloweth where it listeth, and we hear the sound thereof, but canst not tell where it cometh nor whither it goeth, so is it with every one that is born of the Spirit.' Presently the storm lulled, the heavy clouds parted, and the sun shone out, its beams silvering the wet green leaves of the branches that concealed the opening of the cave. The cows began once more to graze quietly, and I stepped out of my place of refuge. 'Twas the same landscape I gazed on as I had so often done before, but somehow it looked different, the hills, the fields, the trees, all seemed to me to wear a changed new aspect, the

new found peace in my heart appeared to reson them also. The joy of my soul must have left an impress on my face, for at night, when Annie was asleep and father was out, I crept to my mother's side, and opening my Bible, pointed to the words, 'My Lord and my God!' and whispered, almost afraid to hear my own voice saying such a thing, 'Mother, I can say that now.' She looked at me, drew me close to her, and kissed me, saying, 'Thank God I've heard you say that before I die; but, Mary, I've known it since ever you came home. I read it in the look of peace in your face. but oh, mind, you'll need to put on the whole armour, for the enemy is a subtile one.' No more words passed on the subject, but mother must have told father something about it, for at worship (exercises we called it), he gave thanks that one of the household had listened to the 'effectual call,' and re-

ceived by faith the imputed righteousness of Christ; and when I went to bed, he too kissed me, and bid me press on to the prize of the high calling in Christ Jesus, and then, for a while, life went on as usual. The same, and yet not the same—for to me common duties became tinged with heavenly hues,—when done heartily as to the Lord, and I learned something of the meaning of the words, 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him—but God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit.' Often, dear Edward, as I think on the changes that so soon followed those peaceful months, do I bless God that ere times of trial came the Good Shepherd had sought me and carried me with rejoicing into His fold, and thus become my guide,—'He does all things well.'



CHAPTER VII.

MY MOTHER'S DEATH:

WAS eleven years old when my first sorrow fell on me; a sorrow so great, that even now I can hardly bear to write of it. I had ceased to act as herd-girl for a year before that time, mother wishing me to have more regular schooling, and requiring me a good deal at home, for somehow she was not so able for work as she used to be,—got easily tired, and glad to rest, it was so unlike her way, that I often found myself wondering if she were not really ill,—but when I asked her she always evaded my question, or

said she was just in health as the Lord willed her to be, and she had no will but His. But she strove anxiously to show me how to do many things for father's comfort, which formerly she would have let no one but herself do. 'Mind you, Mary,' she'd say, 'your father's not a young man, and is not like many of the men in the neighbourhood, he's been used to have home comforts, and likes them, and would miss them, though he'd never say a word, but only Mary I tell you all this that you may see to it when I'm away.' 'Away where, mother?' I said, but as I spoke her meaning flashed on me, and I trembled all over; then I spoke—' Mother! mother! you're ill, very ill, and you've never told me mother! you must not go—I can't live without you — Can't live without you.' Oh, Edward, how often we say these words, aye, and believing them, all the time, but our loved ones are taken. and life becomes a changed thing for us, yet we live on, and by and by new interests occupy us, and our loved ones are not forgotten. No no, but we learn (and a hard lesson it is to learn) to live without them; but to return to my subject, from that day my eyes were opened - my mother was slowly passing away. She lingered on for a few weeks, not suffering much, only getting weaker and weaker. All the neighbours were kind; the minister called often, he said he came to teach, but he went away taughther simple faith resting on Jesus never faltered. Truly she seemed to breathe the air of the land of Beulah, and to eat the refreshing grapes of that country. The inmates of the castle,—this grand old castle from which I now write,—heard of my mother's illness, and came often to see us.

The little girl I had envied so when a child, now nearly grown up, rode down often to bring my mother flowers and fruit, which she prized much. These were weary weeks to me; it seemed that in the prospect of losing my mother, joy had gone out of my life, yet through all I felt the everlasting arms were round me. At last the change came; the loved and loving mother, the wise counsellor of my early years fell asleep in Jesus, and I stood with father and little seven-vears-old Annie, and gazed on her peaceful countenance, her last words echoing in my ears, 'Take care of your father and little Annie, Mary, don't forget, "He that is faithful in least is faithful also in much."-" The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord." were the first words my father spoke: then he knelt down, and Annie and I did

likewise, but no words were spoken. I knew my father could not trust himself to speak. I don't think he shed a tear, he was an undemonstrative man, but he loved her dearly, and he was a changed man from the day of her death; he never repined, but he suddenly aged. On the funeral day, a stranger who judged only by externals, and knew not the depth of my father's loving heart, would have said that old George Munro was the greatest mourner there; he, poor old man, cried like a child; well he loved her, and I heard him mutter, as he looked at the coffin, 'She is safe now in the land she loved to speak of, where there is war no longer.' I caught the words, and thought of her, as I so often do now, sitting under the trees on the banks of the river that flows with silver sound through the streets of 'Jerusalem the golden,'-of

which she used to sing. Poor little Annie sobbed aloud as she saw the coffin carried away. I would have liked to have followed it, at least for a little way, but I had to stay to comfort her, and for her sake to gulph-down the sobs that were almost choking me. Ah, 'tis well when God sends us some needed duty to perform along with some new pain. The next day father resumed his work, and ere long life went on in the usual routine. The same outwardly, but inwardly—ah, that is not a subject to write on-my Edward, if he lives to man's estate, and has loved and lost, will know what it means, and understand that there are feelings that one cannot express in words. Two years passed not unhappily; if each day brought its cares it likewise brought its simple pleasures, and although deep down in the heart there was

an under current of grief, yet the rejoicing of a child-spirit sparkled on the surface, and by the first spring after our mother's death, Annie and I were, to all appearance, as blithe as the other village children whose homes were as yet unshadowed by deathnot that it was altogether so, the budding trees, the tender springing grass, the spring flowerets, waking from their winter sleep, all had a new meaning to our hearts, and spoke to me as they had never before done, of resurrection, life, and bliss, and through the laughter and gaiety of childhood somehow heaven seemed more real and far nearer since our mother was there. But with father it was different, his grief told, and tho' spring too. brought to him holy thoughts of immortality. it brought with it no spring of joy as to this life, and when Annie and I returned from the woods, our laps full of spring trophies, all filling our hearts with joy, our father would try to smile, but I saw plainly it was at our pleasure only. But one thing pleased me much during these two 'years, and that was, that my father began to make a companion of me, and in his spare hours would get me to read-with him and make me a sharer in his thoughts, thoughts so strong, pure, and helpful, that in after-life they have often aided me in hours of perplexity and difficulty; often too, when Annie was asleep, and he and I sat alone, he would tell me something of the clever boy he had loved so well. Ned Mackintosh, and wonder if he would still be alive. My life was a very busy one, and all my day dreams about being a fine lady had long ceased, though at times I would still stand dreamily gazing at the castle, not now wishing I could live there, but wondering what had become of the little

lady, as the castle, since shortly after my mother's death, had been untenanted save during the autumn months—when some strange gentlemen would appear for a few weeks and shoot over the property—but my dreaming would be cut short by a remembrance that it was time to prepare my father's dinner or supper, and with a sudden start I would turn away with my mother's favourite text sounding in my ears, 'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might;' and those other words, 'He that is faithful in little is faithful in much.'



CHAPTER VIII.

THE LONG LOST FOUND.

beauty, had come again, the luxuriance of the foliage and the richness of the ripening corn was spoken of by all, as far above the usual. One day I remember well, Annie and I had strolled away through the woods, admiring in our hearts (though we could not have expressed it in words) the greenclad trees, as their leafy branches met overhead and formed a bower of rare beauty; we loved to wander there. I think it was the soft green light, and the mysterious sounds made

by the summer breeze amongst the leaves, and the chirp and buzzing of various insects, mingled now and then with the coo coo of the cu shat doo, that enchanted us so much, and some how we intuitively begun to sing as we sat there, some of our mother's songs of the land afar off, where:—

'The Lamb is all the splendour,
The crucified the praise,
His laud and benediction,
The ransomed people praise.'

And sometimes little Annie would nestle very close to me and say, 'Tell me, Mary, what mother is doing now?' and I had to tell over and over how she was walking beside the silver river, with the redeemed ones and Jesus himself, and singing praises on her golden harp to Him; and that day the child whispered that she too longed to be there, I felt as if a sudden stab went through my heart,

and I said, almost sharply, 'Annie, mother used to say we should wish for nothing but the Lord's will,' and it is life we must be thinking of just now, don't let us sit dreaming here any longer, there's work to be done at home, let us be stirring; and so we rose and went on our way, but my heart felt troubled, and I doubted if I had really counselled the child as mother would have done; but surely Annie was not going to leave me? for I fear me much, Edward, I would have grudged her even to 'Ierusalem the Golden' just then, but ere long her merry laugh rang out again as we ran along the course of a bonnie burn, as we call it, as it gurgled along, overhung by fragrant birch trees and hawthorns, and on the banks of which grew many wild flowers unknown to us. We had just emerged from the woods, our hands piled with posies and our heads (for hats we had none) garlanded

with leaves, when we came suddenly face to face with the farmer's wife to whom I had acted as cowherd. She greeted us kindly (as indeed she did whenever she met us), and bid us ask our father if we might go the next * day with her to a neighbouring town to see a grand welcome given to a gentleman belonging to the place, who had come home from India, and in honour of whom the town was to be decked up with flowers, and the day kept as a holiday. Just as she was speaking to us father came up, carrying his tools in his hands, on his way to do some work at, the school-house. Without giving Mrs Wallace a chance of a word, Annie and I both told him what she had said, and begged to get leave to go. He consented at once, saying, it was kind in Mrs Wallace to think of fashing wi' us; then smiled at our eager happy faces, and kissing us went on his way, a sad look

crossing his face as we parted. Maybe he was wondering at our joy whilst his heart was so downcast and weary, yet I scarce think that was what clouded his brow just then. An event of such importance was a matter of great excitement to Annie and I. The dawn was just breaking when we awoke, and ran to the window to see if it bid fair to be a fine day; and it proved as glorious a one as I ever remember. Little did we two imagine what changes in our lives the events of that day were to bring about. We were all ready in our Sabbath dress, neat homemade black print frocks and straw bonnets with black ribbons, when Mrs Wallace drove up in the gig; father lifted us in, proud of his bit lassies, as he loved to call us, then trudged off to his daily work, and wedrove away in great glee. Ah, Edward my boy, I often wonder if you, brought up as you will be, in the midst of luxury, will ever taste as much real enjoyment as we did with our simple pleasures. All the events of that, to us, memorable day, seem indelibly impressed on my memory. The high road that we drove along, the carts, horsemen and gigs that thronged it as on a market day, the flowers that studded the high banks on either side, the look of the town itself, with the ocean flashing silver in the distance, all rise clearly before my eye as I write, and in my ears dear Annie's voice of glee rings as it never more will ring till we sing together the song of the redeemed in glory, and cast our crowns at the feet of the Lamb. The bustle of the town confused us children, so unaccustomed to noise of that sort, and somehow the crowds and the gay arches and the booths made me think of vanity fair, in our favourite 'Pilgrim's Progress.' I half expected to meet

Christian and Hopeful walking through it, yet refusing to turn aside or tarry. Presently, as we stood on the steps of a door, along with many other people, a greater commotion began, and a grand carriage drove up with an elderly gentleman seated in it; he had a kind benevolent face, and seemed much pleased with the cheers of welcome which greeted him. He drove through most of the streets, then stopped at the large inn, where a grand repast was prepared for him: Before we left, Mrs Wallace kindly took Annie and I into some shops, buying us biscuits, and delighting our hearts, by presenting us with neat needle-books. The drive home was even pleasanter than before, and we arrived at our cottage, full of glee, at all the exciting scenes we had witnessed. But I was conscious, for the first time in my life, of a feeling of vexation at the smallness of our thatched cottage. contrasting it with the fine houses in the town. I think my father read my thoughts, for he said quietly, as I lay in the twilight, with my arms twined around little Annie, and my head resting on his knee, 'Mary, the Lord Jesus was a poor man, and times there were when He had not where to lay His head. Shall the servants seek to be greater than the master? Nay nay, my bairn, having food and raiment let us therewith be content.' I felt ashamed then that I had been wishing to be greater than our Lord, 'who, though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor.' Just then a sound of wheels was heard on the road close by our cottage, and presently a knock came to the door. 'It will be the minister in his gig,' said my father, 'come to ask if I have finished the wood-work in the school house yet—I'll go to him myself, bairns;' and quietly putting me and Annie aside, he went to the door.

An unknown voice, clear and distinct, asked if any one of the name of John Mackie lived Before my father could answer, the same voice said, in a tone of pleasure, 'but why should I ask? John, my kind old friend and benefactor, have you quite forgotten vour wild favourite, Ned Mackintosh?' Our father, so little accustomed to give vent to his feelings, gave a cry of surprise,—' Ned, is it possible! the Lord be thanked that I've lived to see this day, my poor poor misguided laddie, why did ye leave us-could you be feared for your old friend? then he led him into the room, bidding him over and over again welcome, and never seeming to remember that we bairns were in the room. He sat down, fairly overcome, grasping Ned, as he called him, all the time by the hand, and wept like a child. Never till then had I realized how much my father had cared for the lad,

who had cost him so many anxious thoughts, and even now I wonder why the tears that refused to flow when my mother died, should have come so easily then. Maybe sudden joy is harder to bear than sorrow. Into the details of that night I cannot enter, suffice it to say, what my Edward has no doubt already guessed, that the moment Annie and I saw the gentleman we recognised him as the one to whom we had seen so much honour payed. that day. I was bewildered; was it some fairy story, such as George Munro loved to tell, could the grand gentleman from the far off country be indeed the boy Ned Mackintosh, of whom we had heard so much. But one thing I know, that it was not of the gold and silver and earthly honours that my father thought. but of the joy of seeing once more his loved friend, and having learned from his lips, that in the far off country, he, like the prodigal of

old, had come to himself, and turned to his Father in heaven; and at family exercises that night, my father's voice almost failed as he read aloud the Scripture portion, and returned thanks to our Father in heaven, who had brought back the long lost wanderer. Long after Mr Mackintosh had left, and little Annie was asleep, father and I sat together talking over the wonderful events of the day, and as he gave me my good night kiss and blessing, he said, 'Oh, Mary, if your mother had been alive this night she'd have been a happy woman!'





CHAPTER IX.

THE FARM HOUSE.

ANY were the changes which followed that memorable day. Mr Mackintosh soon won our hearts, and many a pleasant evening was spent in our own little cottage, as he recounted stories of his Indian life, of his marvellous success there, my father and George Munro drinking in every word with delight, proud of the talent displayed by their favourite, whilst Annie and I sat and wondered at his descriptions of the far off golden land; and father's eyes would fill with tears when Ned, as he alway called him, would suddenly stop in the midst of his dis-

criptions of all the wealth and grandeur by which he had been surrounded, and say, 'but my bairns, the day came when my eyes were opened to see and care for better things than silver or gold, even the unsearchable riches of Christ Jesus,' and father would stroke my head and say, aye Mary, 'Effectual calling is the gift of God.' Ere long we were told we were to leave our old house. Mr Mackintosh had bought a large farm in the neighbourhood, and there we were all to live with him, father's working days were to be over, and he was to spend his life in peace and rest, whilst Mr Mackintosh at once announced that as he had no relatives of his own, he was to regard my sister and myself as daughters, and have us educated as ladies. Oh Edward, well do I remember the pain I felt when first told all this; now that the dream of my childhood was about to be realized, instead of happiness it brought great sorrow, for a hint had been given that as soon as my father was comfort. ably settled in the farm, my sister and I were to be sent to a boarding-school in the city of Edinburgh. I could not brook the thought; what, leave my father, whose comfort my mother had intrusted to me? Sorely did I rebel at the very idea of the impending change; vet despite all the change did come. Well do I remember the day when we left our cottage home; the golden summer was merging into autumn, and the foliage of the trees in the castle wood was fast becoming painted with many tints, some glowing crimson when the sunbeams fell on them, others seeming as of burnished gold.

The sun was setting amidst violet and amber coloured clouds, as I stood alone on the threshold so often crossed by her I loved so much, but whom I could see no more on

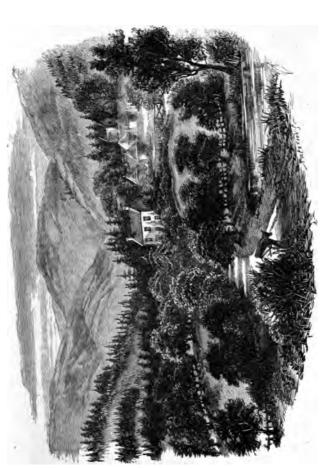
earth. The roses she loved still grew lovingly up the walls of the little cottage, and almost unconsciously I had filled my hand with them, thinking they were the last I would ever pluck there, for on the morrow other inmates were to obtain possession of our old home. Close by a little robin sang out his evening hymn on the branch of a tree just overhead, whilst long golden sheets of sunbeams still flickered on the dancing rivulet, which always reminded me of the clear flowing river of life in the golden city. My child heart was very full, and I knew this parting was but the prelude to a sorer one, and a life amongst strangers, even in imagination, filled me with dismay. I think I could have forced back the tears that were ready to fall, but just then a robin began to sing, and something in his well-known notes overcame me, and leaning my head against the open door

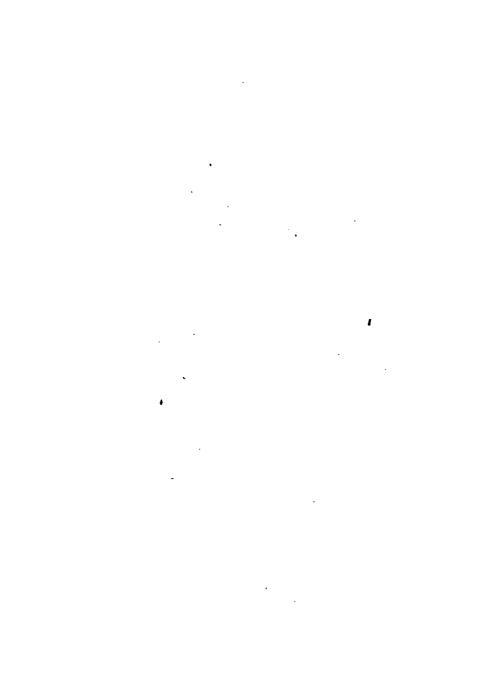
I cried bitterly. A feeling of loneliness, such as I had scarce felt since the day of the thunderstorm, when I had sought refuge in the cave, oppressed me, when all at once-the old words of comfort rose to my lips and brought peace to my heart, 'Lo. I am with you always.' Ah, it was no unknown unproved friend who said these words, but my own loving living Saviour, whose praises my mother was singing on high, but who was ever present with a simple child like me on earth. How dare I think I could ever be where He would not dwell with me, and with the remembrance came comfort and rest, and when I raised my head and saw how fast the sun was sinking behind the distant hills, I remembered that I had still duties to perform, at the new home, where father, and Annie and our new friend, Mr Mackintosh, were awaiting me, and, no doubt, wondering what

kept me so long, for I had wandered three miles through grass fields to take this last quiet peep at our old home. Quietly I shut the door and turned away (I could scarce bring myself to say homeward), with my mother's words on my lips; never forget, Mary, 'whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might,' 'He that is faithful in little, is faithful also in much,' and as I walked, I turned the words into prayer, and asked our Father in heaven to help me by the Holy Spirit's aid to be faithful to every duty He laid before me. Tenderly did my father feel for me, and sought to point out how plainly the Lord was ordering all our way. Well did I know that he would never have sought earthly advancement for his children, but only desired that they may faithfully fill the station of life wherein they were placed; but when the leading of the Lord was shown so clearly he

could not hold them back. Mr Mackintosh had carefully thought of and provided for my father's comfort. Our new home was furnished with what to us seemed every luxury. and an elderly God fearing woman installed as housekeeper. Mr Mackintosh was to reside with my father, and Annie I and were to spend the summer holidays with them. A suitable school had been found for us, kept by the Misses Pinfold, in the city of Edinburgh, of which we had heard so much; and as days went on, I found myself wondering what like the castle would be, and thinking with awe of some day beholding the Grassmarket, where many of our noble covenanting forefathers had given their lives in testimony for Jesus. Little Annie could hardly be made to believe that she was to exchange the fields and woods she loved so much for the streets of a pentup city, the only thing that reconciled her.







being that her sister Mary would be with her. Ah, how we loved one another, Annie and I, my bright little sister, who seemed to me always too bright and gentle and loving for the trials of life. The parting day came at last; my father's farewell blessing was spoken over our heads: 'The Lord God Almighty bless you and keep you my bairns, and may the light of His countenance ever shine upon you and give you peace. Keep close to Him, and never be ashamed to confess His name. The Lord watch between you and me, while we are absent the one from the other;' and so we parted, my sister and myself to enter on a new path of life, for us beset with thorns and stumbling-stones; but we entered not alone, an unseen yet ever present Guide was with us, to help and sustain us. Oh, may my boy early learn to know, love, and follow that wise Guide and Counsellor!



CHAPTER X.

THE BOARDING SCHOOL.

of my life are far from pleasant ones. Bright spots there were here and there, but shadows prevailed, and but for the one never failing presence and holy hope we would have been desolate indeed, we motherless children, for, Edward, we had not been many days at school ere we discovered that we knew little of the ways and manners of ladies, though I feel sure that the habits of thought and of daily life so early taught us by our mother, had more of the true lady's spirit in them than the so-called courtesy of many of our companions. Still, the gentle

breeding and manners of the world were far from being ours, and the finding ourselves so unlike those with whom we lived was no small cause of humiliation, at least to me. Gentle Annie felt it less; her bright sunny spirit overlooked all petty trials, and never resented the insulting remarks made by some on our awkward ways,—for it soon became known that despite our riches we were only the children of a working man. The first time the taunt was thrown at me, I raised my head proudly, and acknowledged the fact, daring any one to prove that my father was aught but a noble-minded right-thinking Godfearing man. What if he had earned his bread and ours also by the sweat of his brow? had not Paul the apostle made tents, and Peter and James and John were fishermen, aye, and had not a greater than these, even our Lord himself, worked at the very same

trade as my father did? But my bold declaration availed me little; a whisper running round the room that it was horrid to be at the same school with a carpenter's children. Of course the Misses Pinfold were unaware of the state of matters, and were ever kind and painstaking with us both, but, notwithstanding that, the first two years were times of sore trial to me, and often in the bitterness of my spirit have I wished that my father's friend, Ned Mackintosh, had never returned from the far off country, and desired to make - ladies of my sister and myself. That process seemed very easy in fairy tales, but, ah me, in real life it was quite different, and many a day when sitting over my embroideryframe have I longed to be once more the little girl in our humble cottage, helping mother in her daily duties, and knitting stockings for my father and self. On occasions

such as these, when almost despite myself the tears would blind my eyes, and so hinder my work, I would be helped to drive them back by the remembrances of my mother's text, 'He that is faithful in that which is little. shall be faithful also in much.' Maybe the present little which just then was learning the art of embroidery, might be a preparation for some higher duty, and, at all events, was one of the things which I should do with my might. Yes, my boy, when I now look back on those years I see in them God's way of training me for higher duties, and believe, painful as the discipline was, it was for both of us the needed. It prepared the one for an early entrance into the King's palace above, and the other for arduous duties awaiting her here in His mansion on earth.

But amid the shadows bright gleams came, sunny spots pleasant to look back on. The strange beautiful city had charms for me; the tall houses, the grand old castle, and the cathedral of St Giles, so full of associations to a child brought up as I had been amongst the enthusiastic admirers of the great Knox, from the pulpit of which he had preached. and in the churchyard of which he was burried, the Earl of Morton saying over his open grave, 'There lies one who never feared the face of man.' And well do I remember the day, when accompanied by Miss Pinfold herself, I obtained my first sight of the Grassmarket, which to me seemed hallowed ground, as the scene of the cruel death of some who loved the Lord Jesus better than their lives, some whose names were still spoken with hushed breath and uncovered heads by the cotters and farmers in our neighbourhood. But, after all, the bright time of our lives was when the summer holi-

days came round, and after a long journey pent up in a stage coach, we found ourselves once more at home, with father's loving arms around us, and forgot all the troubles and griefs attendant on being made ladies, in the golden sunshine, the leafy woods, and all the wealth of summer beauty around us. Then Annie's eyes sparkled as of yore, and the roses that paled on her cheeks in the town came again, and we felt nothing but joy. Mr Mackintosh was satisfied with the progress we had made in education and manners, and dear father felt thankful, he said, to find that the holy lessons of our childhood were not forgotten, and sometimes would sit thoughtfully, looking at us, then say, 'Ah well, He's a covenant-keeping God. "Leave thy fatherless children to me, and I will preserve them alive." Mary, my bairn, you grow liker your mother every day, and oh! keep near her

Saviour.' These were the words he spoke one evening ere we returned to Edinburgh, when I was fifteen, and felt a woman grown. 'Stay till next year, father,' I said, 'and I shall come home and keep house for you once more, like the good old times, and we'll get a governess for Annie, and all live together, and be so happy. I'll play on the spinnet to you (I can do that well now), and I'll sing your favourite songs. Oh, I wish next summer were come! And it did. Silently time runs its course; the regular monotony of our school life seemed to make it go all the faster. I had grown into womanhood, and had learned to be thankful for the steady discipline and education of the last three years; lessons begun and carried on only from a sense of duty had now become a pleasure. Books were my greatest delight whilst for music and drawing, it had been

discovered I had great talent, and I was glad to think that Mr Mackintosh would be satisfied that his money had not been wasted; and as for Annie, though hardly twelve years she was as clever, and far more advanced and accomplished than any girl of her years; and she was so pretty, her fair complexion and golden locks forming a great contrast to my own. We loved to sit, she and I together, in the twilight, discussing our future plans. Annie making me promise over and over that she would not have to return to school alone. It was a happy winter for me altogether, for Mr Mackintosh had several friends in Edinburgh, and as I was almost finished, and he wished me to enter a little into society, I had been allowed to spend my Saturday's with them. The only drawback to my happiness being that Annie was considered too young to share these visits. 9 1



CHAPTER XI.

LEFT ORPHANS.

PRING was almost turning into summer, green leaves were fast unfolding on all the trees, and the sky wore the appearance of summer, when one evening my sister and I sat alone in a corner of the stiff school-room in Miss Pinfolds', when that lady entered the room with a grave expression of face, and asked me to accompany her to her own room. I rose, wondering much for what delinquency I was to be called to account, for a visit to Miss Pinfold's room was one much dreaded; but the

moment my eyes met her I knew there was some bad news awaiting me. Oh! how I trembled to hear it; only once before had I felt so, and that was on the day when my mother had made me understand that she was dying. My first impulse was to shut my ears, and refuse to listen to the confirmation of my fears, but I had been early taught to control myself, and even when I had heard the worst (kindly told), that our loved. honoured father, our last remaining parent, was dead; no tears fell, no words came, not till I reached my own room, and had thrown myself in dispair on my bed, did I get the relief of tears; then they came fast enough my father dead and me not with him. I who had promised to watch over him, and seek only his comfort, not even allowed to stand by and minister to him in his dying hours. Oh it was hard to bear! And why had we not

been called we, his only children, and in that hour of conflict bitter thoughts of Mr Mackintosh rose, aye, and even of God, but that thought lasted but a moment; the rememberance of Jesus on the cross stayed in one instant all hard thoughts of our heavenly Father—'He gave His Son for us.' Edward, if ever in life the thought arises in your heart that the dealings of the Lord with you are hard, look to the cross, that wonderfulmanifestation of His love, and doubt no more. I had lain sobbing for some time, thankful that no one came near me, when I remembered that a duty lay before me, Annie must be told, no one must do so save myself. I forced back my tears, gulphed down my sobs, and kneeling by the bed, told all my sorrows to the Father who never changeth, and asked for grace to help us, two orphan girls. As I prayed the answer came, the voice of Jesus stilled the

great agony of grief, with His calm peace, be still. Ere an hour elaspsed, Annie knew all, and was sobbing out all her sorrow on my breast; and I was glad to think that she had that resting-place, and that there still remained to me this dearly loved charge, and I resolved, if I could help it, nought save death should ever part her and me; and nothing else did. Letters came soon, telling all. I need not have thought hardly of Mr Mackintosh, his heart bled for us. Our father's death had been a very sudden one, but his old friend was by his side; words there were none, and we needed none. His love to us we knew, and his love to his Saviour also; to him sudden death was sudden glory, but the loss to us, ah, how bitter! He was laid in the quiet churchyard which I see from the window of the castle as I write-beside my motherthere they sleep in Jesus, and other loved ones

lie beside them. I wonder when my turn comes will my boy sometimes quietly rest on my grave, and shed some tears to his mother's memory, as I have done to mine; but to return to the story of my life, our plans were changed, but not yet were we to return to our native village, for another year we were to remain in Edinburgh, but not at school, though Annie was to spend most of the day at Miss Pinfold's, we were to live with friends of Mr Mackintosh, and mix daily in society fitted to our changed fortunes. Mr and Mrs Murray were kind friends to us, and I was treated there as the grown up daughter of the house, and many of the duties incumbent on one fell to my lot. To these I tried to prove faithful, doing what lay to my hand, and finding pleasure in them. There were many clever literary people frequenting the house, whose conversation was helpful and improving, but,

above all, the Christian example of Mrs Murray was useful to me. To her I loved to speak of my mother, and little Annie learned to love her also, though sister Mary always retained her warmest love. It was at this time that we became acquainted with one who proved to me a most valued and loved friend. 'Girls,' Mrs Murray said to us one morning, about six months after our father's death 'a young friend of ours is coming tomorrow to spend a few weeks with us, Lady Ethel Leslie, only daughter of the Earl of Old-tree. She is about a couple of years older than you are, Mary, and I am much mistaken if you two don't become fast friends, for Ethel is a dear girl, and is as good as she is beautiful.' I rose from my work-frame, and threw my arms playfully round the dear old lady's neck, saying, nay nay, I feel jealous already of this strange visitor, promise she is not to usurp my place in your heart. She smiled, but shook her head, saying, she hoped her heart was large enough to hold more than one or two dear · ones there, though she believed her two orphan lassies had got a pretty warm corner in it. I returned to my embroidery, and worked away, my thoughts full of Ethel Leslie-would we like one another, and above all would she take kindly to my little treasure, sister Annie. The next day answered both questions, for Lady Ethel arrived, and her blithesome ways and her bonnie face took our hearts by storm, and ere many hours had passed we three were talking together in a quiet corner as if we had known each other for years. Mrs Murray was satisfied; and every now and then nodded her head in her quiet way, saying to herself, they'll do. The one will help the other—God help them both. Ere we went to bed that night Ethel surprised us by coming in somewhat hastily to our room. Her rich auburn hair falling loosely round her, nearly to her waist, and throwing herself between us two, as we sat our arms twined round each other's necks. declaring she also was to get 'a share of our caresses, for she had no sister of her own, and longed, oh so much, for one, and now would we let her be a sister to us? Dear impulsive How we learned to love her, and Ethel? how fully she one day came to fill to me the place of sister when my own dearly loved one had taken flight to the better place, and was singing a song which we on earth could only feebly echo-for, Edward, as you may have already guessed, Lady Ethel Leslie was no other than your own dear aunt Éthel, your father's only sister, who is even now, as I write, riding up the castle avenue with her husband, Lord Glenlooe, to ask how fares her sister Mary, and the precious babe, in her brother's

But to return to our abode toabsence. gether at Mrs Murray's-every day seemed to draw Ethel and me nearer to one another, we read together, studied together, talked to one another over our embroidery-frames, as young girls have talked and will talk, whilst time lasts; and in our graver moods, when twilight filled the room, and the dear old lady was indulging in a quiet nap in her own room, we would sit looking out into the old-fashioned garden, and talking of holy things, of the loving care of our heavenly Father-of the humanity and tenderness of our Saviour, and long to beable totell some who knew nought of Him, of His wonderous love, and then Annie's bright eyes would glow, and she would talk of our dead mother, and begin to warble some of her loved psalms and hymns till our eyes would fill with tears, and once more I would fancy myself sitting, as of old, by the dancing

rivulet, with father and mother and George Munro listening to the hymn of the city above, where—

'Through the streets with silver sound,
The flood of life doth flow;
Upon whose banks, on every side,
The wood of life doth grow.'

At first Annie would have the singing to herself, but ere long Ethel and I would join softly in, and sometimes, as my voice was counted the finest, after we had sung a verse or so, the voices of the other two would cease, and I would sing alone; often as we sang, the door would open quietly, and Mrs Murray would slip in and sit listening to us. She never wished us to take any notice of her entry, and would never allow us to cease because she came in. One summer evening we sat in our usual place in the twilight—on low stools, close by the

bow window, from whence we caught a view of the castle looming down on us—we were dressed in simple white muslin dresses, all three alike, save that Annie and I wore black ribbons whilst Ethel had blue. We were singing the Scotch version of Psalm civ., and had gone through many verses of it; none too many for us, when I suddenly became aware of two things, one, that Mrs Murray must have slipped into the room unobserved, and the other, that for the last few verses I had been singing alone, and as soon as I finished the verse, a special favourite of mine:

'I will sing to the Lord most high, So long as I shall live. And while I being have—I shall To my God praises give.'

'Of Him my meditation shall Sweet thoughts to me afford; And as for me, I will rejoice In God, my only Lord.'

I stopped, a strange voice said, how truly beautiful, and turning quickly round, I saw a tall handsome stranger (gentleman), into whose arms Ethel threw herself in a state of perfect delight, exclaiming, 'Roderick, darling Roderick, where did you come from? you dearest of all dear brothers'-she had us quickly introduced, and we soon were talking away frankly to one another, and that, Edward, was my first introduction to your father. Lord Roderick's visit was a short one, he had come intending to carry off his sister Ethel to her country home, but Mrs Murray pleaded so earnestly that she might remain a few weeks longer, that he at last gave a reluctant consent.

Shortly after hier from Mr Mackinton have my sister and him, and second

lady to act as governess to Annie and also as a companion to me, though he hoped I was to prove myself a qualified housekeeper, and I was overjoyed at this proposal, for my heart longed to minister to the comfort of my father's kind friend, and to live once more amid the woods and fields of my childhood, and I resolved-God helping me-I would try my utmost to fulfil aright the new duties awaiting me. Ethel pouted a little at the idea of my acting as housekeeper in a farmhouse, but Mrs Murray chid her gently, saying, 'She was no true lady who could not usefully fill any station in life to which she was called by God.' 'Be faithful, my dear,' she would say, 'to your new duties, interest yourself in all the details of housekeeping. and of the farming also, and if it be the will of the Lord to call you to a higher station, it will be found that you, having been faith-

ful in little makes you ready to be faithful also in much. It was about this very time that the attention of Ethel and myself was directed to a very pleasant looking lady in deep mourning, who 'passed our house regularly every morning, returning about four in the afternoon. We also were returning one day from a walk with Mrs Murray, when a cart turned sharply round the corner of the road which led past our house, just then a little child was crossing, and startled by the sudden appearance of the cart, and the wild look of the horse attached to it, stood still, uncertain whether to turn back or go forward: one other moment and the horse would be on it, when the 'lady in black,' as we girls styled her, our unknown friend, ran forward and lifted the child out of the way; for a minute she stopped to soothe its fear, then gently crossed with it, and seeing it safely up the steps of a neighbouring house, evidently its home, walked quietly on as if nothing had happened; the whole transaction scarcely occupied five minutes.

'Now, girls,' said Mrs Murray, turning to Ethel and me, 'that's what I call having one's wits about them; no surer outward sign of a calm regulated woman's mind, than being ready to do the right thing at the right moment; depend upon it if we knew that lady's history we would find her to be a true heroine, not of romance, but of every day life, presence of mind is an admirable quality.' But we were strangely enough to hear more about the lady in black. Mrs Murray's greatest pleasure was in visiting the poor and afflicted, and few had the powers of comforting and cheering she possessed, and weary sick souls there were who told how the Scripture words of love were first read to them by Mrs Murray

whilst she gently told what she herself had experienced of a Saviour's power to save. 'I never cared for these things myself girls,' she would say to us, 'till some years ago I went, when in London, to hear a preacher called George Whitefield—curiosity took me, as it did many others anxious to hear the oratory of a man who could touch alike the hearts of such as Lord Chesterfield, and the most ignorant colliers at Kingswood. I went into the church as careless about my soul as the most reckless there, but ere I came out the eternal world seemed to be the only one worth living for. All thoughts about the eccentricity and the eloquence of the preacher were swallowed up in the thought of the wondrous love of Him of whom he had been preaching, even Christ, Jesus; some mocked, others called me mad, but one thing I knew, there was one won my heart that day whose beauty has ravished it

ever since, and whose power has made old things pass away and all things become new -and so, out of the abundance of her heart came the loving words of holy comfort which made her so welcome in the house of mourning. 'Glad to find you at home to-day, Mrs Murray,' said her friend and minister, Mr Jones, 'as I have come to ask you to do me the favour of calling on a widow lady who is a great invalid, and almost a stranger in our city; she has seen better day's, but since her husband's death has been left almost penniless. quite dependant on the small sum earned by her daughter, who teaches as a daily governess, and during whose absence the old lady is left very lonely. I fear me she is very ill, a true patient Christian she seems, and if you would visit her I am sure she would be much pleased—take the young ladies with you,' he said pleasantly, it is good to learn early to

care for the sick and lonely, and bright young faces are a wonderful refreshment in a sick room.' We went, and found Mrs Laurie all Mr Jones had said, but Mrs Murray thought much . worse in health than he had led us to expect, indeed even to our young inexperienced eyes it was plain that death was near. The very first day, ere we left the house, we knew that the faithful daughter who worked so hard to keep her old mother was none other than our gentle looking lady in black. But I must not tarry over this part of my life; suffice it to say, that very shortly after our first visit the old lady died, and on Mr Jones's recomendation -seconded by what Mrs Murray said of the daughter, Mr Mackintosh, who had come to town to take Annie and I home, engaged her to accompany us as a governess and companion, in which latter capacity she remained till the day of my marriage.



CHAPTER XII.

LIFE AT THE FARM.

ADY ETHEL remained in town almost as long as we did, and her brother came often to see her, very often she would say and smile, remarking, with her blithe laugh, that she supposed he liked to look at her, for his words were mostly addressed to me. I hardly knew what I thought then, only I felt very glad when I saw him, and fancied no other voice chimed so well in with our songs as his; then he had travelled a great deal, and it was pleasant to converse with him, and, of course,

we had one subject in common in our love for Ethel, but as to love—I never stopped to define what my feelings were towards him. I only knew everything looked bright when he was near, even though the weather was cold and raining, and the words he said were remembered long after others were forgotten. As to anything else, what could there be between the son of an Earl and I? Mackintosh and he met also, and I learned long afterwards, that even then Roderick had told him how much he cared for me, and had asked leave, when I was a little older, to pay me his addresses. Then Mr Mackintosh told him my whole history, and warned him as to the unsuitability of such unequal marriages, and I love now to think that he could say Mrs Murray had told him all my history ere we had met, and that he loved me for myself, and believed me noble enough to fill

any station. Ere we met again I was the acknowledged heiress of the castle and lands of Hilton. But I never cease to remember with pleasure, that your father loved me and sought my hand long ere then. On our return home I began to keep a diary, and for you, my boy, I will make some extracts from it which may serve to give you an idea of my life at that time.

APRIL 17-8. Home once more at Dunmore Farm. Ah, how changed it looks! at least within doors. Constantly I find myself starting, as the door opens, and looking anxiously round, half expecting to see the form of my dearly loved father enter, and I can hardly bear yet to turn my eyes to the place where he was wont to sit, and many a time Annie's soft blue eyes fill with tears when she glances towards it. But, out of doors, nature is as bright as of yore, and the fresh spring

breezes chase away all gloomy thoughts, and make Annie and I wild with delight. bright green buds are clothing all the trees now, and some of the earlier ones are already covered with such tender fresh new leaves, that rustle with each breath of wind; and in the woods, the beauty of the mosses, out of the heart of which the pale primrose buds seem to spring, appear to our eyes of more than ordinary beauty. We love so to go there, Miss Laurie, Annie, and I, and sometimes Mr Mackintosh joins us, and says he too feels as if with the renewing of nature he also renews his youth, and sings a new song to the Lord of Creation. It, was good to see him to-day, seeking with the eagerness of a boy for the first wood violets and primroses, and pulling the vellow tassels off the willows that grow beside the favourite stream of our childhood days, then stopping suddenly, he

raised his head reverently, and breaking out with the Psalmist's words, said slowly, 'O Lord, how manifold are Thy works! in wisdom hast Thou made them all: the earth is full of Thy riches.' Miss Laurie and we get on well, and Mr Mackintosh says I make a good housekeeper; that pleases me, for that is my present duty, and I can always ask the Lord Icsus to help me to perform it to the best of my power, and I believe He does. It is no idle life we lead here. I am up by five in the morning, and am early out of doors superintending work there, it is so pleasant in the early morning. The maids were already milking the cows to-day when I went out; the patient creatures were waiting anxiously till the time came for them to be turned out to the fields I had once or twice opened the door to let them pass, and now they turn their large soft eyes on me

with eagerness as I enter, and soon they troop off to the green meadows, where the sheep and little woolly lambs are frolicking about: then there is dairy work to be done. in which I take an active part. Mr Mackintosh demurred about this at first, but I begged to be allowed to make myself useful. So what with managing the house and studying regularly so many hours with Miss Laurie and Annie, my days are well filled, and profitably so, I hope. Several times already my sister and I have gone to the churchyard to visit our parents' graves; we speak few words to each other there, our hearts are too full for speech, but at night Annie will creep close to me, and nestle her head lovingly on my breast, as if she feared death would come and part we two-my beautiful Annie!'

'JULY 18.—Life is so full, so rich, so beautiful in these summer days. I can scarce put

into words the joy of my heart, 'Loving kindness and tender mercies from our heavenly Father' seem to encompass us around, and every day our hearts, Annie's and mine, get twined more round that of our dear old friend-Mr Mackintosh. What a wealth of beauty there is in Nature. Just now the goddess of summer seems to have poured out lapfulls of floral beauty all over the earth, and already the fields are turning golden unto harvest. Ethel Leslie is here, so gay and bright; at first she pouted at some of my home duties, and laughed at our homely attire, but she is reconciled now, says, she too recognises my duty is in fulfilling the work given me, and comes half daintly into the dairy whilst I am churning and assisting in cheese-making, but by and by she tucks up her dress, draws off her long elbow gloves, and sets to work. just for fun you know, she says, with her

arch smile, but some days the fun continues till the butter is made, and then she claims the right of being called a useful member of society? And my poultry, how she has learned to love them, and they seem to reciprocate the love; indeed, I feel a little jealous that my own pet snow-white hen has taken so much to her. I am quite learned now about poultry, and to me they are a source of great pleasure; one does learn to love these little creatures one has tended from the day they came out of the egg.

JULY 20. I had written so far when Ethel and Annie came in and carried me off for an evening walk; how charming these summer evenings are. The sun was sunk behind the hills ere we returned, but the soft pink blush lingered long, and now the summit of the hills glowed under that light, which there was golden still. We were all

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three subdued, those lovely sunsets calm one so, and Annie especially they solemnize. I know at these moments her thoughts are wafted to heaven and to Jesus. How she grows in grace, this sweet sister of mine, and how tenderly the poor people about love her; we often visit them, and on the very evening I am writing of, we turned into George Munro's cottage to see him. The old soldier is very old now, but he is ready for the bugle sound to call him home. 'He's no feared,' he says, 'for you see, Miss Mary, I ken the Captain well, thanks to her that's in glory, your sainted mother, and He's fought ower many battles for me to leave me at the last; nae, nae, as the bonnie hym: she liked to sing says,

'They who with their Leader
Have conquered in the fight,
For ever and for ever
Are clad in robes of white.'

Softly and unexpectedly Annie's voice chimed in—

O sweet and blessed country,
 The home of God's elect!

 O sweet and blessed country,
 That eager hearts expect.

'Jesus, in mercy bring us
To that dear land of rest;
Who art with God the Father
And Spirit ever blest.'

She looked wonderfully beautiful just then, and the old man's eyes filled with tears as he listened. Then we rose to go, Ethel and Annie went off together. I lingered to say a parting word. But the old man scarce heard me, his eyes followed Annie. 'Aye,' he said, 'yon's an angel like her mother, and I'm thinking it'll no be long ere she enters the "Home of God's elect," she's ower frail for this life.' His words struck a pang into

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my heart, a dark shade came over everything, all the beauties of the sunset vanished, but I could not say one word. I only ran fast after my companions, and drew Annie very close to my side; she smiled at my excited manner, but she clung very lovingly to me. My darling young sister, oh! if—but I will not write foreboding thoughts, only I have been thinking how hard (nay, unbelief says how impossible) under some circumstances it would be to say truly, 'Thy will be done.' Many of the jottings which follow this time in my diary are so unimportant that I will not copy them even here, they were chiefly of everyday life, noting many a detail of farm work, how the crops ripened and were cut down by the shearers, in their bright short gowns; then follow the stacking of the grain and the wind-up by the harvest home. These were busy months,

succeeded by à dull dreary November, followed by a cold snowy winter, enlivened by many in-door comforts and quiet merriment. But in the February of the next spring some jottings are given that tell of a change.

FEBRUARY 9. I have been up for long busy at work, and yet the sun is only newly risen. Those quiet morning hours have a great charm for me, and to-day it is so lovely out of doors, snow has fallen all night, and the fields, hills, and trees are dressed in spotless white, while the little birds are hopping about disconsolately, looking in vain for food. Some have come to the sill of the window near which I am writing, plainly demanding crumbs, which Annie loves to scatter to them; and here comes blithe robin red-breast, more audacious than his friends the chaffinches and linnets, actually daring to tap on the window-pane to remind me of his pre-

sence and my duty regarding him. well Robin, have patience; and here comes one as blithe and bonnie as yourself, with a bowl full of food for you all. My little Annie, who loveth all God's creatures, and would not hurt the tinest of His created beings; her pet pigeon is on her shoulder, and her pet spaniel trotting beside her. Well, the crumbs were freely given, Robin taking them daringly from our hands, and then hopping into the room, perching in a corner where he is free to remain till the snow melts. But even Robin failed to keep Annie long this morning from my side; her face wore an anxious somewhat troubled look, as she'threw her arms round my neck and said, 'Mary dear, is it true this news that George Munro hinted at yesterday? that Mr Mackintosh has bought Hilton Castle, and we are all going to live there? Mary, say it is not so.' But I



'Have patience, Robin; and here comes one as blithe and bonnie as yourself with a bowl full of food for you all. Her pet pigeon is on her shoulder.'—FAITHFUL IN LITTLE, page 118.



could not conceal the fact, Mr Mackintosh had told me only the previous evening, saying that from henceforth I was to be the acknowledged heiress of Hilton Castle. From the first he told me I was to take on me the duties of Lady of the Manor, and the servants were to be taught to consider me as such. No wonder that I felt bewildered, shrinking from such onerous duties, longing to be again the simple village child, and so with my own heart full to overflowing was scarce able to comfort poor Annie, who shrinks hesitatingly from the thoughts of living in the castle which, from our earliest childhood, had been our beau ideal of grandeur, and which really was, as you, my Edward, will know, a truly ducal residence. We had only one resource, my young sister and I that winter morning, and that was in prayer; we knelt together, and besought our Father in heaven,

who, we knew, was able to help us in the new life before us, to glorify Him, making us faithful in that which was much. Annie's eyes were dry when we rose, and once more seating ourselves at the window, we talked a while of our changed plans, my gentle little sister's face lighting up as I spoke of the many cottage homes we would try to brighten, and how we would make it our endeavour to be kind and helpful to our tenants. 'Say yours, darling Mary,' she said with a smile, 'for it is you who are to be the heiress;' and it was true. Annie was to receive a portion. a very large one, but it was to be that of a younger daughter, it was Mr Mackintosh's wish that I was to be the heiress of the castle.



CHAPTER XIII.

HILTON CASTLE.

into the castle; this castle, the birth-place of my darling boy. It all looked like a dream even then, and now, as I write, one scene seems to run into another in a hazy sort of way. Ere long, however, we all seemed to fit into our new mode of life in a wonderful manner. Miss Laurie helped us all much at that time; her good sense and active habits were of no small aid. There was a pang in leaving the farm home, with its associations; and the night before we left, my sister and I

slipped softly down to the old cottage and rested a while beside the little rivulet; we knew the inmates well, but that day we shrank from even exchanging words with comparative strangers; we only wished to sit a few minutes and muse on the past, and breathe a silent prayer for the future, and we desired too, on entering on our new and dazzling change of life, to have our thoughts turned once more to the humble station to which we had been born. It was a very lovely spot that June evening; the thatched cottage itself was almost hidden with the clusters of pure white roses, which covered its white-washed walls, while over its roof hung the rich golden tresses of an old laburnum tree; birds were singing their evening hymn of praise, and the bees were returning to the hives with a droning hum, laden with the spoils of the day, whilst through all was

heard the noise of the little stream gurgling and bubbling over the white stones. we be as happy in our castle home as we were here?' whispered Annie, and I answered not, for I could scarce believe that any spot on earth would ever be quite to me what the humble cottage of my early days had been: but I recalled my mother's words, that mere outward circumstances have no power to make or mar happiness, but knowing the love of Christ in the heart and fulfilling faithfully our daily duties, those who have the one and perform the other must be happy either in a castle or a cottage, and this is the lesson I would impress upon you my boy. We rose at last, and retraced our way to the farm house. Those first weeks in the castle, how strange they seemed, save when out of doors-there nature was an old well-known friend, the woods, fields, and hills, were all familiar to us.

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We failed to realize that they were our possessions, we had so long loved them and enjoyed them as the glorious hand-work of our heavenly Father, as our favourite poet, the gentle Cowper, whose lines we loved to repeat says:—

'His are the mountains and the valleys His,
And the resplendent river His to enjoy
With a propriety that none can feel,
But who with filial confidence inspired,
Can lift to heaven an unpresumptuous eye,
And smiling, say, 'My Father made them all!'

When autumn tints were reddening the woods, and the reapers were busy in the fields, the golden corn falling rapidly beneath the sharp sickles, when hazel nuts hung in clusters on the trees, and bramble berries were in profusion on the hill sides, our loved friends, Mr and Mrs Murray, came as our first visitors at the castle. How happy we all were then,

and how wisely the kind old lady counselled us as to our new duties. Just before that time we three had begun to collect a few of the cottage children on the Sabbath evening in a large empty room in the castle, to hear them read passages in the Bible and portions of the Shorter Catechism, and then we taught them to join us in singing some psalm or hymn. They liked coming, and we, assisted by Miss Laurie, taught them for one hour, and sometimes Mr Mackintosh would come in and tell them how many of the Bible customs were still to be seen in use in the eastern countries where he had been, and now and again, with tears in his eyes, he would impress upon them the duty of obeying and honouring their parents, adding, if they failed to do so, they would repent it bitterly all their lives, and when he spoke so, we knew how his own heart smote him for basely deserting his mother

and leaving her to be cared for in her last days by a comparative stranger. Very bitterly had he repented of his sin, but he knew it was washed away by 'the blood of Christ,' still the memory of it was a bitter sting as long as he lived. Annie was very blithe these autumn days; busy with her studies, yet having many recreations, and finding her way into the cottages of the poor, where she was dearly loved for her gentle ways, and the words of comfort that fell from her lips. Mv sweet Annie, Oh how she would have loved you my boy; but autumn was changing to winter, the trees were almost stripped of their leaves, when a panic seized me-I was seated in our boudoir—the very one from which I write, which Mr Mackintosh had fitted up for us with almost oriental splendour, when Annie entered, and seated herself by my side. She looked agitated and very pale, and at once a fear,

which refused to put itself into words, came over me. 'Are you well, Annie?' I said, but my voice trembled, and she answered, 'Oh yes, at least not ill, only the cough hurts me to-day' (she had coughed for some weeks, only a cold we thought), but as she spoke she pressed her handkerchief to her mouth, and drew it back stained with blood. Ere I could get assistance she had fainted. Of the weeks that followed I will not write, one or two jottings taken from my diary will tell all.

DECEMBER 12. The thing which I greatly feared has come upon me—my gentle loving sister is ill, dy——oh, I cannot write that word, and yet 'tis even so. My idol—for such I now feel she was—is stricken down, and, but for the pang of leaving me, she is glad to go. Almost from her infancy she has loved like a personal friend our Lord Jesus; and now the thoughts of going to be with Him, and see

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Him face to face, fills her with joy—but me, Oh selfish heart! I cannot let her go; not yet Lord, not yet is my heart's cry. All that can be done has been—doctors have been got from great distances, Mr Mackintosh has spared no money; but, ah me, wealth cannot give health, and I see well that though in a different form it's the same complaint of which our mother died. She is so patient, so grateful, so resigned—only her eyes fill with tears when she looks at me. God help me to repress my grief so as not to sadden her last hours, and to unfit me to be with her to the last.





CHAPTER XIV.

A SICK ROOM.

though all hopes of permanent recovery had died away. I can look back on that time now and see much of the loving kindness of the Lord in it all—then it seemed bitter enough. How the long dark days of watching and anxiety were brightened for me by the coming of Ethel—aunt Ethel I must call her when writing for my boy. When she heard of our sorrow her first impulse was to come and share it with us, and her parents could not say her nay; and

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so she came, with her sweet face and blithe ways, brightening the old castle and cheering the sick-room. The castle and she seemed to suit one another; she moved about through the large rooms and corridors, like a very queen, and often did I tell her that it was she, not I, that should have been lady there. Annie was so pleased to have her, though I think it was more for my sake than her own. She loved to see the smile play on my face once more at some of Ethel's old fashioned ways. She could be so prim and sedate, that playful girl; and then again, whilst the winter wind was howling, and the frost-king was holding regal state out of doors, we three, Ethel, Miss Laurie, and I, would sit in the snug warm room, out of which Annie was never moved now, and sing the hymns she loved so well. but in which her voice would no longer mingle. No, we knew, and she knew, that

the next time her voice was raised in praise, it would be with the redeemed around the throne, in that hymn in which even angels cannot join, but only lean on their harps and enjoy the wondrous beauty of the melody. The new song—'Thou art worthy, for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood.'

Mr Mackintosh, too, often joined our little party there, and I loved to see him as he sat gently holding Annie's white, ah me, too white hand, and gazing on her sweet holy face with a father's love. Annie's room, though a very comfortable one, was not one of the best in the house; this was her own desire. I don't think Annie ever took kindly to her new abode; the grandeur wearied and oppressed her—the suites of rooms perplexed her, and in her own heart she longed for the humble cottage of her childhood—Ah, my boy,

it is not always well or wise to raise any so much above the station to which they are born as we were. Our Father in heaven knows so well where to place the creatures of His own making, and when man, even with the kindest intentions, changes the place. it often results in failure. Annie was truly happy only in the woods and fields, scrambling the hills, or visiting in the cottages of the poor. Her room stands now as it was in her lifetime; we have left it sacred to her memory. You can see it any day, Edward, the little room in the west wing of the oldest part of the castle; ivy creeps luxuriantly up the walls, but roses, bright roses, peep in as well, and the swallows love to build there—the large lime tree grows close by, and the light which fills the room seems always in the summer days to be of a golden glow, glimmering through the fresh greenery-birds

build in greater numbers near that portion of the castle than elsewhere, and the hawthorn trees there bore always the purest richest blossom. These were the things that Annie loved; and her bed, with its pale pink drapery and snowy coverlit, stands just as it did years ago. The room seems to Ethel and I a consecrated one, as the place where a child of the 'Great King' went home to the palace above. We love to pray there; heaven seems nearer than elsewhere, for we know Jesus, true to His promise, came thither and took His ransomed one to be with Himself for ever. It was during Annie's illness that I first knew your father loved me. Mr Mackintosh himself told me, and asked if he were free to release him from his promise not to seek my hand till I was older. He asked no questions, all he said was, shall I write he is free to come and plead his own cause? and I could not say him nay-

only for Annie's sake I would have said not yet; but my old friend pleaded, nay, for Annie's sake, let it be now; let her have the joy of knowing when she is gone, and I also (for I am not young, Mary) you will have one who loves you to be your stay and comfort, · for her sake, then let him come—and he came -and through my sore grief a strange new joy arose, a joy that can as little be put in words as can be one's great deep sorrows; a joy which should never be spoken lightly of, nor made the subject of foolish jest by men or women. A joy which I hope my Edward will one day experience for himself. Annie's bright eyes glistened with pleasure on the day that Roderick and I bent over her couch, and he kissed her white hand, and told her that one day I had promised to be his wife. Well do I remember the scene—it was a May evening, the air was fragrant with

all sweet smells, and the gentle breezes shook down on the greensward showers of hawthorn blossoms, whilst from the midst of the tender young leaves hundreds of little birds warbled their evening hymns of praise to their Creator, and we two, Roderick and I, with the happy joy of an acknowledged earthly love, stood by the bed-side of one who was a bride indeed, soon, too soon for us, to be united to the Bridegroom of her soul, and dwell with Him for ever. Soon after that day the end came; we were all with her. Ah, mother, sainted mother, to thy dying charge I was, God helping me, faithful. I did to my utmost care for our little Annie, her head was on my breast then, her eye fixed on the pale primrose light that still glimmered in the western sky, Mr Mackintosh held her hand, Ethel and Roderick stood near, and our kind friend Miss Laurie was there also. We had been silent for some minutes, only the clear whistle of a blackbird from the topmost branch of a tall fir tree broke the quiet, when Annie spoke, 'Mary,' she said, 'sing about the silver river.' Ah, Edward, it is hard to sing when tears blind the eyes and sobs are ready to choke the voice—but I silently prayed for strength to fulfill that last request, and it was given me, and I sang of the golden city:

'Quite thro' its streets with silver sound,
The flood of life doth flow,
Upon whose banks on every side,
The wood of life doth grow.'

As I ended her eyes met mine—'Mary,' she said—'Jesus has come,' then looked up and her spirit passed to glory. Yes, *He* came, not an angel merely, but Himself, I believe it's so, for has He not said it? 'I will come again and take you to Myself, that where I am there you may be also.' And I think no angel's

arm can be so safe, so secure, in our journey home as that of our God man, elder brother Our Father in heaven does indeed stay His rough wind in the day of east wind, for I look back now and wonder how I could have lived through the desolate weeks that followed that day, had I not had Roderick's strong love to help me through. Yes, our Father sends us joys and comforts as well as griefs. There was a long pause in my diary after that day; how could I care to note down events in which my gentle Annie no longer took part, and yet, though dead, she spake, nay, my boy, still speaks. The cottagers she loved to tend and help seemed roused by her death even more than in her lifetime, to take heed to her wise counsels, and remember the Saviour's words of love she had taught them-and the school-house. Edward the industrial school, as they called it, owes its existence to her death, for Mr Mackintosh presented me with a sum of money to be used in some way to perpetuate Annie's memory on the estate. I thought of a plan that she and I had talked over, of trying to train some of the young girls in the neighbourhood, not only in school-learning but in fitting them, by a knowledge of household duties, to fill the places of wives and mothers if they were called to them, for we saw much of the misery attendant on the ill-kept houses and bad dinners provided in most of the cottages.





CHAPTER XV.

AFTER THE WEDDING.

N autumn sunset was flushing the woods round Hilton Castle with a rosy glow, and purpling the surrounding hills, whilst crimson and gold-hemmed cloudlets were floating overhead, and the babbling noise of the rivulet was filling the air, when Roderick and I returned from our wedding tour—a short one it had been, for I dreaded to leave our old friend Mr Mackintosh long alone, for, since Annie's death he had drooped and turned suddenly old; but that autumn evening he stood at the door to

be the first to welcome the newly-married couple to their home. How earnestly I prayed that night that in this new phase of life I, God helping me, might prove faithful, for the stewardship is a responsible one, my boy, so many depending on you, so many looking for help and advice from one frail erring creature like themselves.

The wedding was a quiet one, — ah me, mirth could scarce have been in that house, with its fairest, brightest member absent. Mrs Murray left her home to act a mother's part to the orphan girl, and it was Ethel's fair hand that fastened the rich white Indian silk wedding dress, and twined Mr Mackintosh's costly gift of rare pearls in my hair and round my neck. Roderick's father and mother were there, our only stranger guests. Miss Laurie, our gentle friend, remained also, and Mr Mackintosh gave me

away—I, a cottage girl, to become the wife of an Earl's son, and yet, my boy, happy though my married life has been, I look back to my childhood's home as one of the happiest on earth.

We went, Roderick and I, for our wedding tour, to his parental home in the north, where a kindly welcome awaited us. A curious incident happened there: one day shortly after our arrival, we, accompanied by Ethel, her father, and her uncle, were crossing a heathery Highland moor where some cattle were feeding, and a little girl in a scarlet cloak was tending them. As we passed her I said a few words of greeting (my heart was ever warm to a herd girl) when the uncle, Mr Leslie, said, if I had a liking for children such as that, he wished I had seen a herd girl he had met some years ago whilst paying a visit

at the very castle which was now mine, and to my amazement he described myself as I was when a child, and at once I recognised him as the gentleman who had said I would make a beautiful picture, and was of the Milesian type of beauty, adding, as he concluded his story, and you, madam, remind me more of that child than any person I have ever seen.

A blush mantled my face—was I ashamed of my parentage, ashamed to confess the truth? I hardly know how I would have acted, when my noble husband stepped forward, and playfully taking my hand, presented me to his uncle as the real little rural beauty whom he had seen so many years before. A slight confusion followed—then came many questions, but none seemed to think the less of Roderick's bride because she had once sat on the hillside herding cattle.

A happy year followed our wedding dayand many duties filled my time. Ah, I learned that the idea of the rich having nothing to do save drive about in carriages. is only the imagination of childhood and ignorance. Wealth brings many duties, responsibilities, and cares along with it. And day by day I prayed the prayer so early taught me by my mother, for grace to help me to be faithful in that which was much. Our industrial school was opened, and the Sabbath class carried on, and just then a new and very solemn duty devolved on me, as a neighbouring church, the patronage of which belonged to the possessor of the castle, became vacant. Ah me, how the thought that the choice of a minister fell on me, oppressed me. What was I that I should dare to judge on such a subject? Willingly would I have let the people

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choose for themselves, believing that to be the best plan — but it might not be—Well for me then, I had one unfailing counsellor and guide, and to Him I committed the choice, asking Him to send a real Ambassador from Himself, one who would preach the gospel of grace, so that the youngest and most ignorant could understand-and the prayer was answered—a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, anxious only to win souls to Jesus, was appointed minister of the Church of D---. My heart was full indeed, when in the calm twilight of an August evening, Mr Mackintosh, Roderick, and I, walked home through gorgeously tinted woods after hearing the truth as it is in Jesus preached in all its simplicity and fulness by the new minister, Mr Fergus.

Not long after Mr Fergus came to the parish, our dearly cherished friend and

benefactor, Mr Mackintosh, became seriously ill, and it was no small comfort to myself and husband to have one so well fitted to speak the words of life to our dying friend. Peacefully he passed away, resting all his hopes for eternity on the finished work of Jesus, and now he too reposes in yonder quiet churchyard, where rest the bodies of father, mother, and gentle sister Annie, waiting for the coming of the Lord Jesus. -'So many taken and I left!' - Three events are especially marked in my diary of the following years. The first, the marriage of your aunt Ethel to uncle William, as you will learn to call him-a sweeter bride was never seen, and to me it was a great joy to think that her future home was to be within a few hours drive of our own-Ashton House, the property of her husband, is a lovely spot, not so grand as

this castle, but rich in the woodland scenery, in the midst of which it stands, and a daintier little housekeeper than Ethel is can hardly be imagined. She is no idle fine lady, but herself superintends household matters, and in her quiet humours, when she and I talk of the past, she will smilingly thank me for having taught her the lesson that the being faithful in that which is least, fits us for being faithful in that which is much. And we love, with our Bibles in our hands, to trace in the life of Jesus, how He who left us an example we should follow in His steps, did faithfully, day by day, the little things that crossed His path-not seeking to plan for Himself -but to fulfil His Father's will, and how truly He was a living illustration of the text,—'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do do it with thy might.' Ah, my boy, how

many lives are wasted by not performing the work which lies at our hand, fancying it is too small to be worth doing, and dreaming vague dreams about some greater work to be done in the future, which future perhaps never comes, or, if it does, finds the dreamer unfit to perform its new duties. But to return to the second event of those years. A marriage also, and one that gave me much pleasure. It was that of my dearly loved friend Miss Laurie. Through our recommendation she had obtained a situation as governess in a nobleman's family, and ere going to fill it, had come to spend a few weeks with us, shortly after your aunt Ethel's marriage. She and I were walking together one summer evening, returning through the woods from visiting some of the cottages, and I was telling her the praises I had been

hearing of the new clergyman, Mr Fergus, adding, an old woman had said, 'he needed but ane thing, and that was a guide wife,' and indeed I said playfully, 'It is true enough—a real Christian wife is an immense help to a minister, and a comfort to the parish as well,' adding, 'and only think what a help she would be to me in our industrial school and in other ways.' I was half startled at Miss Laurie's change of voice, as she said, 'I believe your wish for Mr Fergus will soon be fulfilled; he is going to be married.' I turned hastily, and needed not to say to whom, for my companion's face told all. I could only say I am so glad—how stupid never to think of it, never to find out why Mr Fergus's visits had been so frequent of late, but I see it all now. No doubt it was quickly made up, and the marriage took place soon, for Miss Laurie was homeless and would not encroach long on our kindness she said, and Mr Fergus was as eager to have his treasure to himself; and so they were married in this castle, and Ethel was wild with delight when she heard it, and went about humming the words,

'Happy is the wooing that's not long a doing.'

The third event was the birth of my darling boy—a New Year's gift—a precious one. Take him and rear him for me, seemed to be the words I heard my heavenly Father saying to me when I pressed my babe in my arms and gave him his first kiss; and oh, Edward, how I prayed then and since, that to this great new charge I might be truly faithful, training you, my child, for eternity, teaching you from your earliest years to act on my mother's favourite maxim, 'He that is

faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much,' and should it be the Lord's will to call me home ere the training is well nigh begun-I charge thee here to take to thyself that motto, and seek God's help to carry it out, so will you become a useful man, not idly dreaming life away, and when you succeed (as you will one day, if you live) to this great stewardship, you will be found, if you have been faithful in your lesser duties, ready for the more onerous ones, and oh, by God's grace, may you one day hear the words said to you as regards higher duties than that of my earthly stewardship, 'Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful in a few things; I will make thee ruler over many enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.'

The mother's writing ceased there. Never had the young Lord lifted his head from

the perusal of the MS, since he had begun it, now he looked up, his large violetcoloured eyes moist with tears. 'Mother, mother,' he said to himself (as he once more bent his head over the book), 'how truly noble and good you were. I would that you could know now how proud your son feels of you. Sooner, far sooner, would I have had you as you were, humble child of lowly parentage, for my mother, than if you had been descended from any of the nobles of the land. Never shall thy boy be ashamed of thee, nor, God helping me, of the Saviour vou loved so well. Oh mother mother, how shall I grow like you, and be fit to fulfil the duties before me, save by seeking strength where you did?' and so saying, the boy knelt in prayer, and asked the Lord to help him to be faithful in his present duties, kind and helpful to all dependent on him, that so when greater cares lay before him he might be fit to be faithful also in that which was much. As he rose, and was about to close the book, he turned a page, and there, in the beautiful illuminated letters he had so often in his childhood watched his mother making, were the two motto texts, 'He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much,' and 'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.'

He saw also that some writing in his father's hand followed, and once more seated himself to read. What he read we reserve for another chapter.





CHAPTER XVI.

THE DIARY.



FEW extracts from your mother's diary, written five years after she

had finished the MS.:-

August 4. This has been a busy day. Ethel, her husband, and their dear little girl, Annie Ethel, as they call her, are living with us, and to-day was a very important one in the annals of our industrial schools. It is now nearly seven years since it was begun. The work done by the girls, such as shirts, stockings, etc., has been sold, and with the money so obtained, small yearly premiums have been given to the best pupils, and the

amount over laid aside to be given as a small dowry to any of the well-conducted pupils, who should be married. To-day, then, we had our first presentation of it. The girl, a shepherd's daughter, has been from the first a regular attendant at the school. She is now nineteen, and leaves the school well fitted to be a useful wife. She is marrying one of our under-gardeners, and we like to think of the household comforts she will be able to give him. She is well trained in plain cooking, such as a working man requires, and skilled in washing and sewing. I like to think she is well trained in higher things also. Since ever we came here she has formed one of the little band who have met on the Sabbath evenings in the castle to read the Scriptures and sing praises to God. She was to begin with, in Annie's class, and loved her dearly. She

thought of her to-day, she said, and of how glad she would have been in her happiness. Is it necessary to say would have been, is she not so? Do our loved ones, who are now with Jesus, not care for the pleasures and happiness of those who remain on earth? I think they do; but it is best not to seek to be wise above what is written, and one day we shall know all. The children, our children (Ethel's and mine) went with us to the school-house, which was all decked up with bright flowers in honour of the occasion. How sweet they looked, the little couple. My boy so bold and manly, little Annie, a year younger than he, so pretty and gentle, with her mother's blithe ways and sweet face, a veritable Ethel in minature. There are two little boys at home younger than she. Ethel's hands are full and a capital mother she makes. It is well for my boy, an only child, to have these young cousins for companions; he has to yield to them, and that does him good; not for worlds would I have my child grow up selfish. I thought of my own dear mother to-day, and her favourite text. The children were playing together out of doors, Annie (called so after my gentle sister) was busy constructing, with a child's eagerness, a pretend house in the roots of a fine old oak tree, under which we were seated. She got tired going some little way to collect a particular sort of white stone she wished to decorate the house with. Edward had been helping her, but got wearied, and set off for a race with his favourite dog. We mothers, Ethel and I, heard little Annie give a sigh as he disappeared out of sight, and say to herself, 'He might have helped me a bit more, I do so want to finish it, and I get so

tired going for the stones. Presently Edward returned rosy with his run, and threw himself down panting between myself and his aunt. 'Mother,' he said, in a while, 'what a dear wee thing Annie is. When I am a man I will go to far-away lands and bring back lots of pretty things to please her,-shant I mother?' 'Perhaps so,' I replied, a scene in my own childhood rising vividly to my memory, 'but meantime, could not you do something to please her? She would care more now about you taking a little trouble to help her with her house than at your sitting idly dreaming what you will do to please her in a time that may never come. You remember'—he started to his feet with his bright smile, 'Yes, yes, I remember, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might." Is not that what you were going to say, mother mine?' and kissing me he ran off to help the stone gathering, muttering to himself, 'I'll go and do that now, but for all that I'll get the fine things for her when I am a man too.' Ethel and I exchanged glances. How these young lives take us back to our own childhood. Oh may I be as faithful a counsellor to my child, as my parents were to me!

Another year, and from the same month I make the following extract:—To-day is a new era in my boy's life. His first tutor has come home, and from hence the chief part of his management will pass out of my hands. It must be so. My boy must be trained to fill the position in life he has been born to. We, his father and I, have not made the choice of his teacher lightly. He is one who himself is taught of Jesus. Gentle yet firm. The boy has taken to him. We talked to-day of the duty incumbent

on us, to be faithful in little things. Mr Watson sees the necessity of this strongly, and I told him some of the special reasons why I wished this impressed on my boy. All the more that I fancy (perhaps it is only fancy) he will not long have his mother's guidance and help, such as it has been. I have not dared to say this yet to Roderick. It is a sharp pang to leave husband and child, and yet to be with Christ is far better. How is it that to-night the gates of Jerusalem the Golden look so near?

A jotting, the last, JUNE 1796. They, Roderick, Ethel, and my boy know all now. The worst is past; for them alone I feared, for all else it is well. Jesus, Thou art all my hope, my long-loved, long-proved Saviour friend. Thou hast died, 'The Just for the unjust;' this is the foundation of my hope. Edward, my darling boy, meet me where part-

ings are unknown. 'Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.' 'Be ye faithful in little.'

And so she died, and her's is, no doubt, the 'Well done' of the Master.

Well did the young Lord remember the parting scene. His hand was clasped in his mother's, then his ear caught her last whisper, 'Edward, my boy, keep near the Saviour, and "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might."

And so ends the tale; 'tis an old half forgotten one. Truth and fiction get strangely mixed in the lapse of years, but has it no lesson for us? Let a poet answer—

'Life is real, life is earnest,
And the grave is not the goal;
Dust thou art, to dust returneth,
Was not spoken of the soul.'

'Let us then be up and doing
With a heart for any fate,
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labour and to wait.'

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